

The Bimborg Syndrome

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Jan/Feb



I'm a Christian King,
not a thug. I used to
be a thug, but I murdered
the old king, paid off
the pope, bribed, killed,
hired minstrels - and
now, I'm as Christian as
any other king.

The Bimborg Syndrome

In an effort to reverse the falling ratings of Star Trek Voyager, the producers brought in a new character, a female ex-Borg in an outfit that might just as well be painted on (they also notably improved the writing, it's actually watchable now although still not as good as Deep Space Nine.) What if other shows also made major tinkering:

Original Trek: Kirk gets a young, sexy ~~intern~~ yeoman for his dealings on board the Enterprise (he just doesn't take her with him when goes to any planet with humanoid women)

Lost in Space: Since they already have a pretty girl in a jumpsuit, they add a female shaped robot for Robbie to pair with.

Battlestar Galatica: They could retool the whole show as a kid's show with a kid giving the orders and a bunch of the ship's children having adventures on Earth disguised as boy scouts. Wait, stop. They did that one.

TimeTraks. This one is almost too easy. Replace the hologram with a more, attractive, interface.

SeaQuest: DSV. Replace the captain and most of the crew, blow up the ship, and give it a new mission. Wait, they did this one too.

Star Trek Deep Space Nine: They seem to retool this show every season or so. They added a space ship for adventures away from the station, brought in Worf from TNG, and had wars with the Klingons and the Dominion. What's next: a sitcom about a half Klingon, half Trill baby?

Babylon 5: This one has already replaced just about every character from the start already. Nothing else needs to be done with it.



Syndicated fantasy series: Hercules, Xena, Conan, Sinbad etc. There seems to be an explosion of these series with fairly good special effects, ludicrous fake fighting, anachronisms galore, and impossible stunts. Quite frankly, I don't see how to make these shows any sillier than they already are.

Team Knight Rider/Viper/etc. The next evolution in these shows with artificially intelligent vehicles is to realize that the vehicles make the humans redundant. Dropping the humans means only paying for the voice actors, not the human actors, a significant savings.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer. This show works only by taking itself and the silly situations totally straight. However, it seems logic that when word gets out about all the monsters and demons etc. being murdered by white WASP preppies, the Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Vampires will quickly get an injunction against Buffy to stop her slaying ways.

Room on Fourth Floor: Bathing Suits Not Included

Elspeth thought she could do a coup for the 2/6/98 meeting at the Gillilands but boogie boy John came in. "Shhh", "That sounds like air coming out of a tire." "I certainly have a spare tire," said John patting his ample belly. "Welcome to the first Friday. I am so glad so many are here. Even some from Maryland."

There was no old business. The treasury was \$8,671.11 with dues due and payable. "Let's have a party" said a chorus. "Let's talk about Disclave," said the Prez. "Mike, I'm not calling on you at your request."

Disclave all-too-soon, Joe, said he had 260 members. Take hotel rooms now. If planning on going, get memberships now. Do it now. Volunteer. He went with Colleen and Erica to do hospitality. "I get the feeling I'm existing on the remnants of Bucconeer." Those willing to have your room on the fourth floor, the hospitality floor, please do it *<and bring a bathing suit>* so we won't have to block off the con suite. This way we just need a guard at the door. There is no corkage but we can do beer and soda on the fourth floor. Downstairs there will be a cash bar or coffee. Open parties will all be on the fourth floor. This will make our con suite bigger.

"Disclave is sooner than we think. Consider yourself nagged. Total on floor is 22 rooms. Plans exist for three of these plus Baltimore. There are 19 rooms to fill with either fans or parties. And those who weren't planning on a party can do so."

Neither other Dis had anything to say. The Entertainment Committee was going to get Linda Tripp to come but has a headache. Mike Nelson said that if anyone wants to run for a position, to tell a trusty trustee. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:45.

Attendance: Pres. John Pomeranz, VP Elspeth Kovar Burgess, Sec. Samuel Lubell, Treas. Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Michael Nelson, Trust Eric Jablow, '98 Chair Joe Mayhew, '99 Chair Sam Pierce, 2000 Chair Covert Beach, Bernard Bell, Chuck Divine, Alexis and Lee Gilliland, David Grimm, Dan Hoey, Chris Holte, Judy Kindell, Perrienne Lurie, Keith Lynch, Keith Marshall, George Nelson, Peggy Rae Pavlat, Rebecca Prather, George Shaner, Steven Smith, Lee Strong, Michael Taylor, Michael Watkins, Madeline Yeh, Arun Seraphin.

83 Days till Disclave

DISCLAIMERS DISCOVERED!

The following pros have indicated that they will be coming to Disclave!

Michael Andre-Driussi

Patrick O'leary

Charles Sheffield

Darrell Schweitzer

Ray Ridenour

Robert Chase

Charles Ryan

Eric Kotani/Yoji Kondo

Nancy Kress

Karl Kofoed

Michael Swanwick

Shariann Lewitt

A NEW GENESIS FOR TWILIGHT OF THE DOGS WSFAN FILM TO DEBUT SOON

by Lee Strong

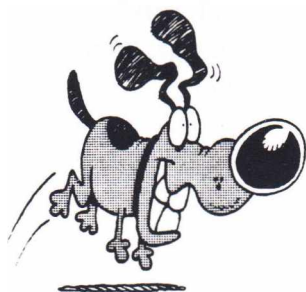
A full length science fiction film made by WSFAns, *New Genesis: Twilight of the Dogs*, will be released direct to video in May or June 1998. This film features the acting and technical talents of many past and present WSFAns.

The story of *New Genesis* - previously known as *Twilight of the Dogs* - is a post-apocalyptic struggle for survival and renewed hope. Civilization has collapsed due to an incredibly virulent plague, and scattered gangs fight for survival like dogs, while a demonic religious leader pursues his bloodthirsty dreams. Into this bleak scenario comes HOPE, brought by the courage and humanity of two unlikely "Johnnie Appleseeds", one human, one alien.

New Genesis was written by former WSFAn Tim Sullivan, and produced and directed by former WSFAn John Ellis. WSFAn actors included Dan Burgess, Susan Cohen, Charles Gilliland, David Grim, Keith Marshall, Walter Miles, Candy Myers, Ray Ridenour, Gary Romaine, Lee Strong, and Martin Wooster. Mike Watkins and other WSFAns financed the movie.

A trailer advertising *New Genesis* will appear on a separate direct to video release, *The High Crusade*, by Roland Emmerich, based on the science fiction novel by Poul Anderson. *The High Crusade* was originally scheduled for release in February and was then rescheduled for release on 3 March 1998.

Additional information about *New Genesis: Twilight of the Dogs* will be announced at WSFA meetings as it becomes available. Or, ask Lee Strong for further information.



Practice Walking On Water

The 2/20 WSFA meeting opened amid a heated debate over the advantages of Staples (yay!) and Kinkos (boo). "Let's have a meeting!" said President John. The call was echoed by a Divine voice. Joe Mayhew said, "Come in and make sure we don't vote your rights away." Despite this assistance, the meeting was not called to order until 9:17.

The first question was, "money". "What about it" asked Bob the Mac. "Do we have any?" "\$8,alkjffjsfoiu" The secretary then said, "Can you say it again slower?" "No," Bob said. "But I can say it at the same speed." This time it came out intelligible. \$8,786.11. Trustee Eric had nothing to say.



I know how you feel; the fundamentalists say they can't believe in dinosaurs.

Disclave Very Soon said that he left his clipboard home. 32 rooms have been taken. By 30th of March he wants a complete list for the 2nd tower fourth floor. The hotel rewrote the contract in our favor so please book a room now. We have 269 members. A couple people here have not yet gotten their memberships yet. Do it now. There are lots of jobs to be done and he certainly hopes they will. He wants signmakers. Remember that Disclave is the first of May and there is not a whole lot of time left. Memberships are \$25. Bill Mayhew is recruiting for registration. Lets not be like the clubs where only half of the people do all the work.

Dis Next, Next, Next (Covert Beach) said "No news is good news." The Entertainment committee reported that his father-in-law has an account for Jim's

education and had a 1090 form. There was a debate over who pays. He also bought his valentine's day candy after the holiday for half price. It was still ten percent more than it was worth.

There was no old business. It was reported that SF writer Jo Clayton died, but she had friends with her and an on-line Internet commemoration saying how much people loved her, so she died knowing she was appreciated. Chuck Divine reported that there will be a total eclipse in England and France on August 11, 1999 and a WorldCon in Australia. He is planning on doing both despite any advice. "You've already done the miracle of multiplying beer and pretzels. So practice walking on water."

Joe Mayhew is doing the *Washington Post Book Review* in March. Candy Meyers and John Madigan are getting married. The club approved of the match. Amazon.com has an article on the Lensmen books.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:32.

Attendance: Pres. John Pomeranz, VP Elspeth Kovar Burgess, Sec. Samuel Lubell, Treas Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Eric Jablow, '98 Chair Joe Mayhew, 2000 Chair Covert Beach, Bernard Bell,

Erica Ginter, Dan Hoey, Perrienne Lurie, John Madigan, Keith Marshall, Bill Mayhew, Walter Miles, Candy Myers, George Shaner, Steven Smith, Lee Strong, Kit Mason, and the memory of Jo Clayton. **69 days till Disclave!**

ALEXIS A. GILLILAND
4030 8th Street South, Arlington, VA 22204
January 9, 1998

Sometime between Christmas and New Year's, Michael's case worker called to tell me that Michael was in critical condition, "critical" being emphasized when she asked if I had made any funeral arrangements for him. No, I said, and the lady replied that there was money in his account to take care of it. On January 7th, a different social worker called to inform me that my son, Michael, had died of congestive heart failure the night before and to offer her condolences.

What is there to say about him? Before he was six weeks old he had been twice operated on, once to correct a full set of hernias—umbilical, and inguinal on both sides; the second time to repair the reoccurrence of the inguinal hernias. Without that vigorous medical intervention, he would have died in infancy. Besides the hernias, Michael had other problems, the most serious surely being the one that killed him at age 34, but the fact that he never learned to speak wasn't trivial. After two years of disheartening negotiations, Dolly and I signed the papers making him a ward of the District of Columbia on April 7, 1970. In the circumstances, that may have been the best that could be done, but we—especially Dolly—felt guilty about failing our little boy.

When I told Charles that his brother had died, he asked me how I was bearing up. I made a joke, telling him that it had made me aware of my own mortality, but since this was something I knew already, it was all right. Or maybe it wasn't; I mourned for Dolly—I still do—but closing the book on Michael was just softly depressing. The one highlight, the one time when he brought us joy to live in memory, was after his first day at the Crippled Children's School when we'd put him in his crib, and he was cooing to himself before going to sleep. Cooing "Aaa, Beee, Ceee," the lesson at the school, and we thought, hey, maybe the kid is going to make it! Well, no, a it turned out. The other stuff, the lows, you don't want to hear and I don't want to remember. The summing up is overwhelmingly negative; pain, loss, and the lasting regrets for what might have been.

MICHAEL LEIGHTON GILLILAND
August 3, 1963 - January 6, 1998

Samuel Lubell's Review of *Someplace to be Flying* by Charles De Lint

I know it's far from a first novel but I just got through Charles De Lint's *Someplace to be Flying* (Tor \$24.95) more or less in one sitting and it is excellent. I keep waiting for everyone to notice how excellent his books are; this could be his breakout book. Although it is set in Newford, the site of many of his books and superb short stories, it stands totally alone (although a frequent reader may wonder how so many different magical creatures could coexist in the same city without running into each other.) The story mixes native American myths about animal spirits and the creation of the world by Raven and the Crow Girls with urban fantasy and gangsters (really!). The animal spirits are able to interbreed with humans, creating people who think they are human but really have some animal spirit blood in them. They are protected by their cousins, the full-blooded animal spirits, who also have custody of Raven's pot, which can unmake the world. The animal spirits are grouped into tribes, including a special hatred by the Cuckoos (who have become gangsters) for the Ravens and Crows (who are artists and street folk). The story happens when Lily, a photographer, is attacked on the street and a gypsy-taxi driver tries to save her, only to be saved himself by the Crow Girls. This leads them into the world of the animal spirits, whom they only half-believe. Mixed into this is a total innocent, who grew up in a mental institution because she believes she has a twin sister who no one else can see. Unknown to her, the twin sister is already in the city and the animal spirits can see her. And then the bad guys capture Raven's pot and things really get stirred up, literally.



De Lint's gift is in making this magic perfectly believable in an urban context. This isn't magical realism, where the magic is taken for granted, but a slow unveiling of a secret world and a magic hierarchy that fits together perfectly as the reader gradually makes sense of what is really going on. Characterization is very strong, especially of the Crow Girls who seem childlike most of the time. They live in a tree and everything in the world seems new and strange. They drink sugar and call it tea, cannot grasp the idea of privacy or personal property, and appear to be 14 year old children (although a character is shocked when he realizes that he's known them for years and never wondered why they never grow older.) At the same time, they can heal injuries and fight cuckoos to the death, perfectly

seriously. The different characters all seem to be their own people (once again De Lint has populated a novel with intriguing artists and street-eccentrics, although this time he does have a few with jobs) with the Crow Girls being especially vivid.

Usually with De Lint's works the plot is less important than the mood and atmosphere. Here, though the plot and atmosphere join together seamlessly. Even the "tall tales" told throughout the volume have a purpose and links to several of the book's characters.

If you have not already discovered De Lint, *Someplace to be Flying* is a perfect place to start. Follow it up with *Memory and Dream* and his excellent short story collection *Dreams Underfoot*. Then, you too will find yourself peeking down inner-city alleys, looking twice at various street-people, and wondering why more readers don't know about his wonderful individualistic brand of urban fantasy. *Someplace to be Flying* has my highest recommendation.

Steven's Reading January/February

by Steven desJardins

When Sam Lubell found out that I had started keeping track of what books I'd read by writing a short review as I finished each one, he suggested putting them in the WSFA journal. I really doubt that most of you want to read about kelp-making in Orkney (some of my interests really are quite odd), but printing the science fiction/fantasy reviews seemed like a reasonable thing to do. The following are reviews of the eleven s.f. books I read in January and February; if you don't like them, blame Sam.

Greg Egan takes the anthropic principle, which says that the universe must contain intelligent life because it cannot exist without an observer, one step further in his novel *Distress*. A cult called Anthrocosmologists believes that in order for natural laws to come into existence, there must be a mind capable of understanding those natural laws. A conference held to decide on a Theory of Everything seems destined to produce this individual, called the Keystone. Unfortunately, Egan being Egan, there are very good reasons for thinking this might be a bad thing, and a group of fanatics is out to stop it. Throw in technological advances which call the definition of humanity into question in assorted ways, and a renegade utopian anarcho-syndicalist artificial island called Stateless, and you have enough philosophy to keep most authors busy for a decade. Recommended.

Saint Leibowitz and the Wild Horse Woman by Walter M. Miller Jr. is a compelling novel, a worthy successor to *A Canticle For Leibowitz*--and once you've said that, what more is there to add? Religion, politics, and ethics are rarely treated so thoughtfully. Highly recommended.

Greenwar by Steven Gould and Laura J. Mixon is an "ecothriller". That means there's lots of interesting environmental technology plugged into a fairly basic thriller plot. The characters are likable, and if you enjoy reading about industrial processes (as most s.f. fans do) this is worth picking up for a fun read.

Corrupting Dr. Nice by John Kessel was an okay book, but I didn't laugh. Since it's supposed to be a screwball comedy, this is a bad thing.

The Gift by Patrick O'Leary is a deeply disappointing book. It's shooting for mythic resonance, but the use of Capital Letters to confer unearned significance on commonplace terms and the awkward introduction of computers, genetic engineering, etc., to 'explain' the fantasy elements are symptoms of the underlying shallowness of his world. The language, however, is what really ruined this book for me. Consider: "First the fishing went bad on the Great River that ran from the northernmost ranges like the spine of a great dragon: Albino fish floated on the surface like leaves in a bowl of broth." I get hung up on sentences like this, trying to figure out how a river can be like a bowl of broth, or why white fish are like leaves, or what a mighty river has to do with a dragon's spine anyway. The more I read it, the less sense it makes, and the harder it is for me to go on. Finally, O'Leary does not handle women well. Fortunately there are very few of them in the book. This is not exactly a bad book--O'Leary clearly is talented--but it is deeply flawed.

Secret Vampire by L.J. Smith is a young adult romance. It would be a good brew, if only it weren't a weak brew. It's easy to read and there are hints of an interesting background. The Elders keep a rigid grip on the Night People (vampires, werewolves, witches) in order to keep control over the human world that's ignorant of their existence. Unfortunately, Smith spends much more time on a basically conventional romance plot than she does on exploring this secret world, and unfortunately the heroine Poppy is unexceptionally perky. Her brother is an interesting character, though, smart, strong-willed, and adaptable enough to credibly challenge the Night World. I've heard the later volumes in the Night World series are more interesting, but picking them up is a low priority.

Jack Faust by Michael Swanwick is utterly brilliant. Mephistopheles is the representative of a malevolent alien race which hopes to destroy humanity by telling Faust--the truth. Faust agrees to this devil's bargain, on the grounds that if humanity cannot use knowledge wisely then it does not deserve to survive. Swanwick's vision of



...And another thing,
no one is going to
believe me: I'm a
science fiction writer.

the industrial empire Faust eventually commands is darkly humorous and takes sharp jabs at some contemporary political ideas. In the end, of course, Mephistopheles damns Faust and all the rest of us, using nothing but the truth. This is the best book I've read in a long while.

Terry Pratchett can be counted on to take a more optimistic view of humanity. *Only You Can Save Mankind* is a video game that turns real for a twelve-year-old boy named Johnny Maxwell. When the aliens surrender to him, he must find a way to lead them a safe home, where their rapidly diminishing fleet will be safe from terrifying human starships that get killed _but keep coming back_! It isn't a terribly original plot, but it is an excuse for Pratchett to make keenly humorous observations on computer games, school, dysfunctional families, breakfast cereal, and the concept of "winning". Light entertainment, far more conventional than his Discworld books, highly recommended.

Johnny and the Dead is the sequel to *Only You Can Save Mankind*. When Johnny discovers that he can talk to the dead, he finds himself with another cause: preventing a faceless conglomerate from constructing an office building on top of the local cemetery. Once again decency comes out on top, as Johnny injects a town meeting with a little good old-fashioned public spirit. Great stuff.

How Like a God by Brenda Clough has an intriguing premise. Her protagonist discovers one morning that he can read minds, and change them. Given this apparently unlimited power, how can he best use it? What acts can be morally justified? And can he even control the power? After he inadvertently hurts his own family, he flees to New York, where he suffers a mental breakdown. His passage through despair, and gradual return to sanity, fills most of the book. Unfortunately the research psychologist who helps him recover is an incredibly annoying Polyanna, he finally gains control partly through a fortuitous incident which falls just short of deus ex machina, and the question of how to responsibly use his power for good is never adequately dealt with. Michael Swanwick's *Jack Faust* deals with the same basic theme in a far bolder and more skillful way. This isn't a bad book, but it could have been better.

Paul Witcover's *Waking Beauty* says on the cover that it's an erotic fantasy. That means there's too much sex. It has a promising opening, introducing us to Cyrus Galingale and his village, part of the intriguingly exotic Heirarchate. This society can reasonably be compared to some of Jack Vance's best. 17 alphabetically named cities, from Arpagee to Quoz, define a rigid social structure. Women are subservient to men, but have a well-defined role which puts their husbands and fathers completely in their power each night. The novel's depiction of religious fervor is exceptional. The complex plots and counter-plots in the second part of the book are well-handled. Only the third part disappoints, as the plot relies heavily on miraculous events, and the science fictional flavor of the rest of the novel is lost. Witcover is clearly a novelist with great potential. I hope he can grow with his next novel into a great writer.

DISCLAVE 1998 COMMITTEE

Chair = Joe Mayhew

Chair Apparent (1999) & Treasurer = Sam Pierce

Chair in Waiting (until 2000) = Covert Beach

Vice Chair for Huxter Affairs = Michael J. Walsh

Registrar = Bill Mayhew

Staff = Covert Beach, Bernard Bell, Chuck Divine, Monica

Forbes, Eric Jablow, Keith Marshall, Maren Mayhew,

Walter Miles, Candy Myers, Barry Newton, Judy Newton,

Lee Strong, Tom Sweeting.

Publications = Evan Phillips

Information = Dan Hoey

Signs:

Art Show = Judy Kindell

Print Shop:

Auctioneers:

Auction Mgr.

Sales

Set-up/Breakdown

Staff:

Program = Sam Lubell

Staff = Mike & Beth Zipser, Eric Jablow, Steven desJardin

Kaffeeklatches (coord: Kathei Logue)

Dance MC: Jim Uba

Party Coordinator = Covert Beach

Speaker to Fans: Elspeth Burgess

Guest Hospitality: Walter Miles

Official Photographer: Mike Nelson

Truck: Chris Holte

ConSuite Coord: Colleen Stumbaugh

Groceries : Erica Ginter

Soda Machine: Keith Marshall

Beer: George Shaner

Hospitality & Sanitation: Lee

Gilliland

Doorkeeper

Baltimore

Executive

Filk Liaison:

Explainer: Bill Mayhew

Support Disclave
WSFA's Convention
JOIN OUR
STAFF!!!

ACTUAL BUMPER STICKERS:

"Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine."

"Cover me. I'm changing lanes."

"As long as there are tests, there will be prayer in public schools"

"Happiness is a belt-fed weapon"

"Laugh alone and the world thinks you're an idiot."

"Sometimes I wake up grumpy; Other times I let her sleep"

"I want to die in my sleep like my grandfather.... Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car...."

"Montana --- At least our cows are sane!"

"Jesus died for my sins and all i got was this lousy t-shirt"

"The gene pool could use a little chlorine."

"I didn't fight my way to the top of the food chain to be a vegetarian."

"Don't blame me, I'm from Uranus."

"Your kid may be an honor student but you're still an IDIOT!"

"It's as BAD as you think, and they ARE out to get you."

"When you do a good deed, get a receipt, in case heaven is like the IRS."

"I took an IQ test and the results were negative."

"When there's a will, I want to be in it!"

"Okay, who stopped the payment on my reality check?"

"If we aren't supposed to eat animals, why are they made of meat?"

"Time is the best teacher; Unfortunately it kills all its students!"

"It's lonely at the top, but you eat better."

"Reality? That's where the pizza delivery guy comes from!"

"Warning: Dates in Calendar are closer than they appear."

"Give me ambiguity or give me something else."

"We are born naked, wet and hungry. Then things get worse."

"Make it idiot proof and someone will make a better idiot."

"He who laughs last thinks slowest"

"Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else."

"Lottery: A tax on people who are bad at math."

"Friends help you move. Real friends help you move bodies."

"Very funny, Scotty. Now beam down my clothes."

"Puritanism: The haunting fear that someone, somewhere may be happy."

"Consciousness: that annoying time between naps."

"We are Microsoft. Resistance Is Futile. You Will Be Assimilated."

"Be nice to your kids. They'll choose your nursing home."

"3 kinds of people: those who can count & those who can't."

"Why is 'abbreviation' such a long word?"

"Ever stop to think, and forget to start again?"

"Diplomacy is the art of saying 'Nice doggie!'... till you can find a rock."

"2 + 2 = 5 for very large values of 2."