

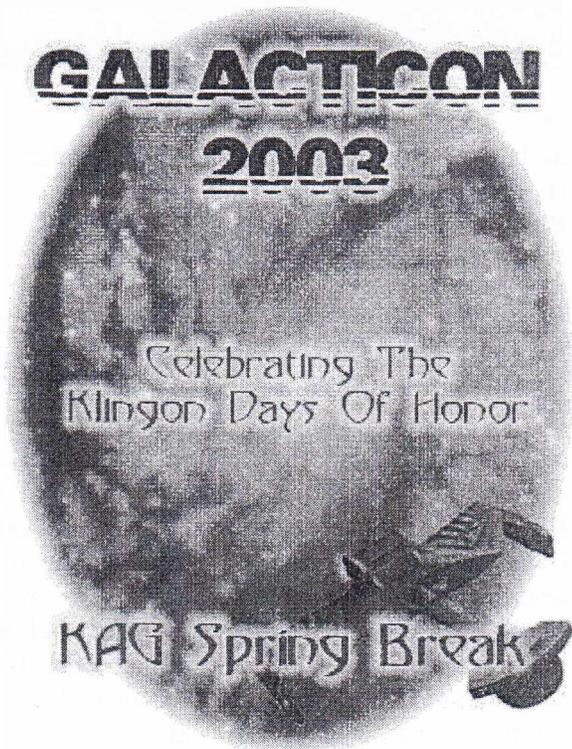
# AVATAR PRESS

Volume 2, Number 26, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2003

## RANDY RANTS

Well, busy have I've been. Mostly working hard to get the latest issue of the *Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin* done and out. I also had to get a bulk mail permit and updating the mailing list. Watching the news has also taken up lots of time (until I realized that watching the news was mostly useless and just checking the days events once in a while was much less frustrating).

I had a good time at ConCave at the end of February but not as good as last year. I did have a very bad experience with faulty plumbing that I will repress. **Julie Wall, Toni Reinhardt, Bill and Linda Zielke** put on a great party with great decorations. Almost all of the art show went to auction (over three hours long) except for my stuff of course. Someone did buy a piece of mine Sunday though.

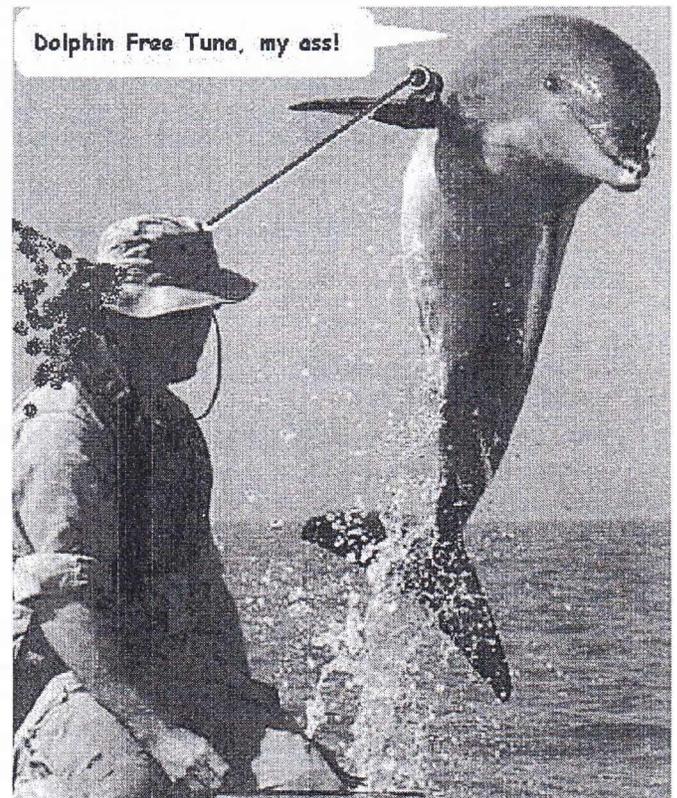


I went up to Galactacon for the day on Saturday March 22. This is a off beat little convention full of Klingons but no exclusive to them (held in the Comfort Inn due to the fire at the Ramada last year). The guests were Pauline Griffin (Author), Patrick Kilpatrick (Actor),

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Michael Martinez (Author), Julie Morgan Scott (Author / Artist), William Blake Smith (Author), Patrick Shatner (Mystery Guest) and Sean Patrick Fannon (Game Designer / Author). There is very little programming. Instead emphasis is on scheduled meals in the con suite, beer and mixed drinks in the con suite, Charity Auction, Slave Auction, and parties. I was too busy to spend more than the day there so I missed out on the parties (including a pirate party and a wet t-shirt party). I heard that a local camerawoman got upset when the media guest playfully patted her behind with a foam sword at a panel and was she said she was going to sue for sexual harassment. The police were called and the guest was taken witness statements and addresses later in the evening. The highlight for me was the lovely Tor editor, Anna Genoese, attempting to serve me potato salad (which I don't like) in the dinner server line. This is a fun informal but cliquish little relaxacon convention.

Here's my one warning about the current war. It concerns the perils of military training for dolphins.



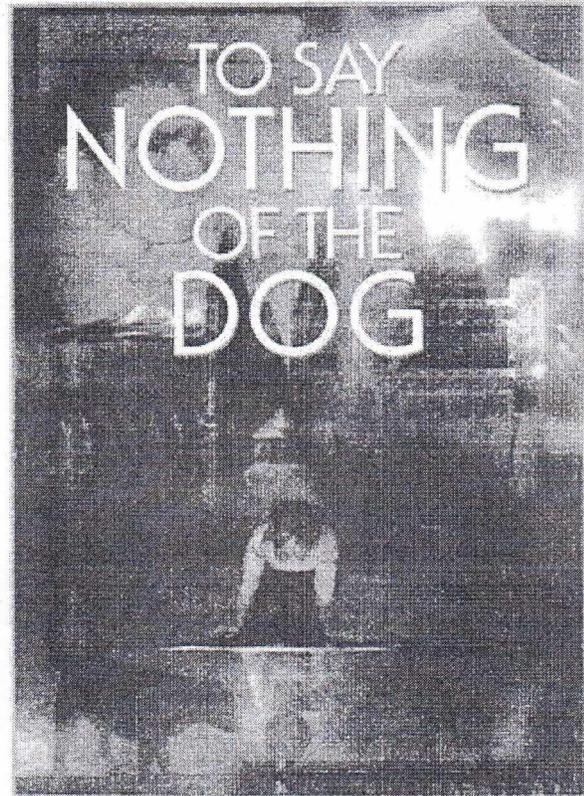
Oh, I bought 120 knives from the Home Shopping Network (poor impulse control). ☒



## BOOK REVIEWS

"THE MOST HILARIOUS BOOK OF ITS KIND  
SINCE JOHN IRVING'S *THE WATER-METHOD  
MAN* AND *A CONFEDERACY OF DUNGES*  
BY JOHN KENNEDY TOOLE."

# CONNIE WILLIS



### *To Say Nothing of the Dog*

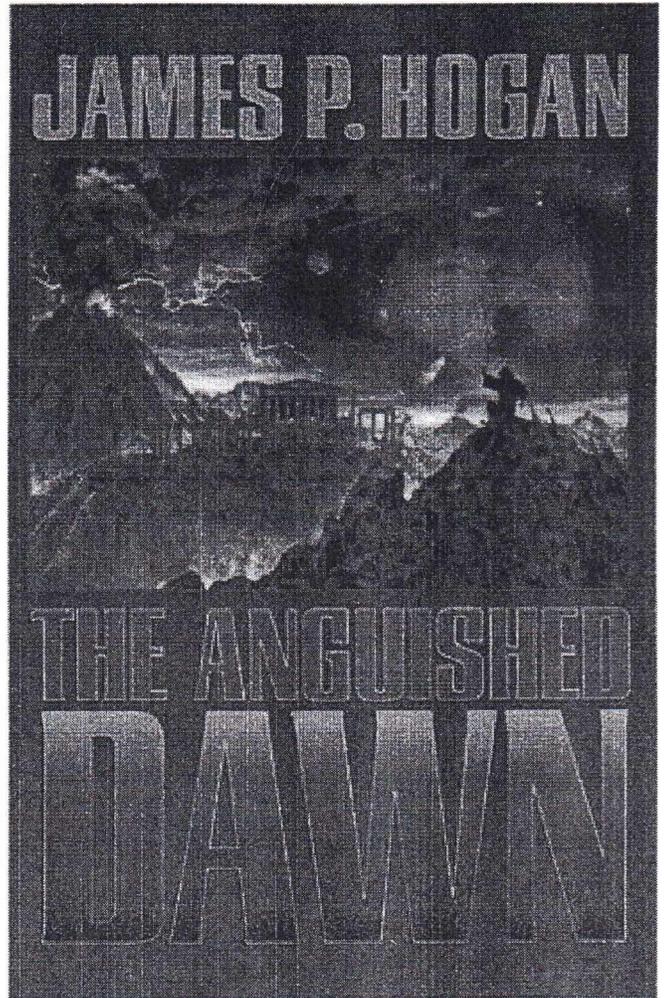
by Connie Willis

Mass Market Paperback: 493 pages ; Dimensions (in inches): 1.08 x 6.89 x 4.18

Publisher: Bantam Books; Reprint edition (December 1998)

ISBN: 0553575384

This Hugo winning novel is a comedic farce full of ironic *Deus Ex Machina*. Since I did not have much sleep whenever I read it, I felt a bit "time-lagged" as the characters. If I had any interest or knowledge of Victoria and/or War War II England, I'm sure I would have enjoyed this book more. However, I only found it mildly amusing in parts. I enjoyed it but I guess my expectations were let down. I rate this book a C. ☒



### *The Anguished Dawn*

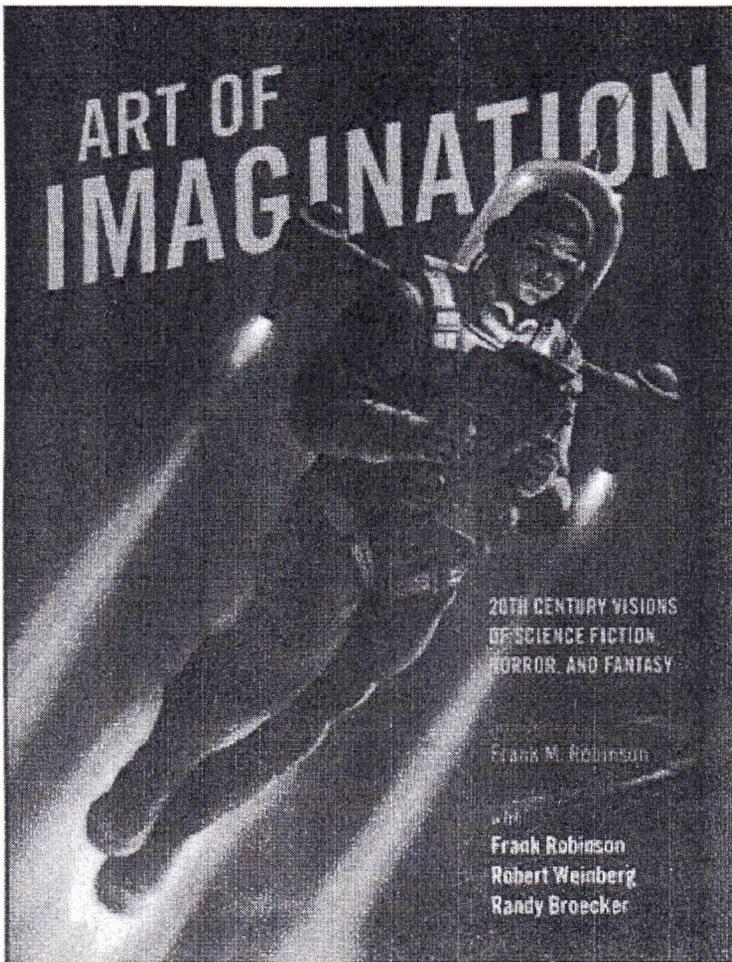
by James Baen (Editor), James Hogan (Author)

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster; (June 2003)

ISBN: 0743435818

Toni gave me this galley (still with some typos) at ConCave. I enjoyed it. It was only after I finished that I realized this is probably a sequel to *Cradle of Saturn* (which I've not read but plan to now). James Hogan basically takes lots of the current fringe science ideas and creates a compelling adventure novel out of them. Earth has been devastated in our not so distance future (only the latest in a several cycles of civilization being destroyed and humanity rebuilding) and there is a struggle between the last remnants of the old order and the brave new order that was arising before Earth was devastated. The winner will of course determine the future of mankind. I can't say I agree with the believability of the social structures put forth but I did enjoy the exploration of them and other fringe ideas. I rate this book a B. ☒



*Art of Imagination: 20th Century Visions of Science Fiction, Horror, and Fantasy*  
 by Frank M. Robinson, Robert E. Weinberg, Randy Broecker, Beatrice L. Bridges  
 Hardcover: 768 pages  
 Publisher: Collectors Press; (October 2002)  
 ISBN: 1888054727

Included in this one volume are "Science Fiction of the 20th Century," "Horror of the 20th Century," and "Fantasy of the 20th Century." It's lists as \$99.95 (even on Amazon). I got it a \$18 from BooksAMillion. Awesome! Okay, I've not read it but I have looked at the beautiful color art on almost every single page. At the price I paid, I rate this book an A+. ☒

 **MUSIC REVIEWS**

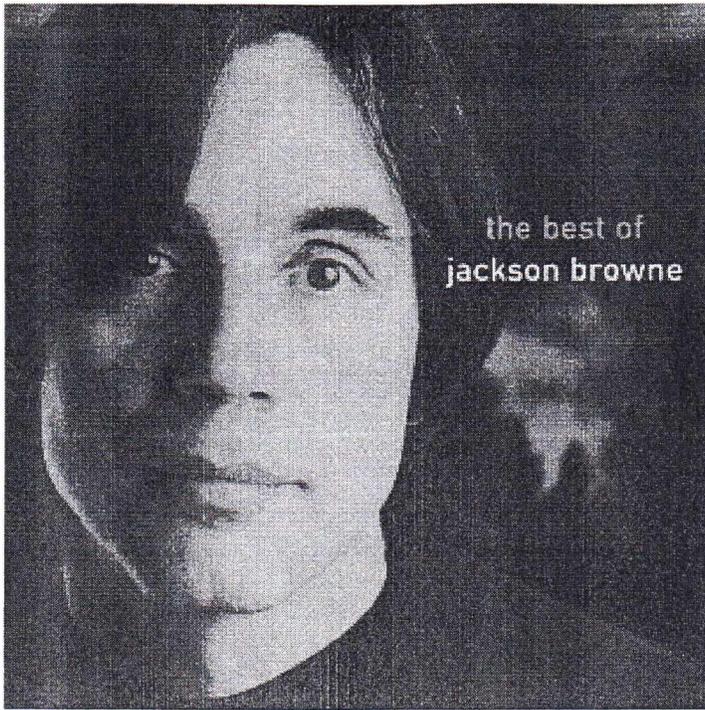
Okay, I've cooled off a little from my CD buying frenzy from last time but still pick up several. Some from Columbia Music and some from the local K-Mart (25% off due to store closing) I still have enough bonus points to get two more *free* (except for the high shipping and handling) from Columbia.

*Don't Fear The Reaper: The Best of Blue Oyster Cult*  
 Blue Oyster Cult  
 Audio CD (February 8, 2000)  
 Original Release Date: February 8, 2000  
 Number of Discs: 1  
 Label: Sony  
 ASIN: B00004HYKZ

Tracks:

1. *Cities on Flame With Rock & Roll*
2. *Red and the Black*
3. *Flaming Telepaths*
4. *Astronomy Listen*
5. *This Ain't the Summer of Love*
6. *(Don't Fear) The Reaper*
7. *I Love the Night*
8. *Goin' Through the Motions*
9. *Godzilla*
10. *In Thee*
11. *Marshall Plan*
12. *Black Blade*
13. *Joan Crawford*
14. *Burnin' for You*
15. *Shooting Shark*
16. *Take Me Away*

BOC is early (for me) heavy metal trailblazers. My favorites are 6 (which I played ironically lately), 9, and 14. The rest are okay. I rate this CD as a B. ☒



*Next Voice You Hear: The Best of Jackson Browne*

Jackson Browne

Audio CD (September 23, 1997)

Original Release Date: September 23, 1997

Number of Discs: 1

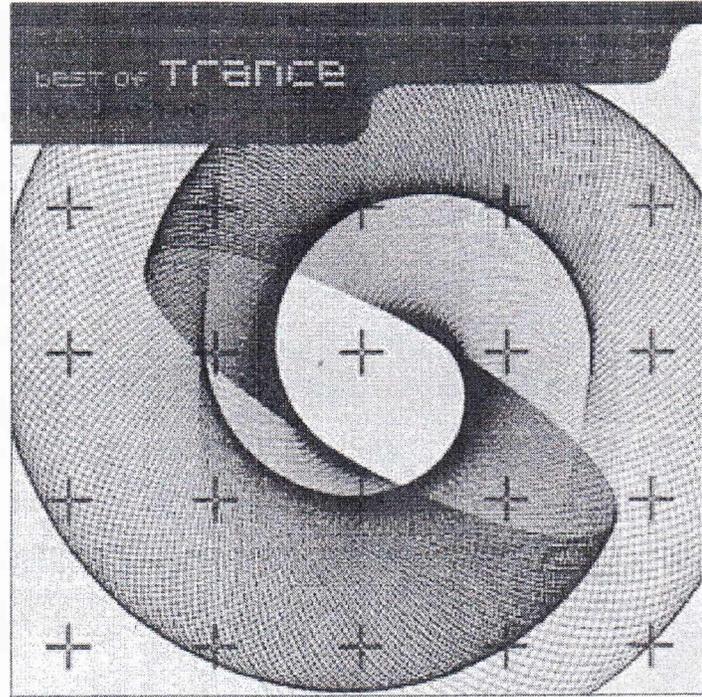
Label: Elektra/Asylum

ASIN: B000002HQY

Tracks:

1. *Doctor My Eyes*
2. *These Days*
3. *Fountain of Sorrow*
4. *Late for the Sky*
5. *Pretender*
6. *Running On Empty*
7. *Call It a Loan*
8. *Somebody's Baby*
9. *Tender Is the Night*
10. *In the Shape of a Heart*
11. *Lives in the Balance*
12. *Sky Blue and Black*
13. *Barricades of Heaven*
14. *Rebel Jesus*
15. *Next Voice You Hear*

My favorite tracks are 1, 5, 6, 9, and 11 (another ironic song for our times). Jackson Brown is a great soft rock lyricist. The other tracks were okay (more so than the BOC CD). I rate this CD a B+. ☒



*Best of Trance, Vol. 2*

Various Artists

Audio CD (October 9, 2001)

Original Release Date: October 9, 2001

Number of Discs: 1

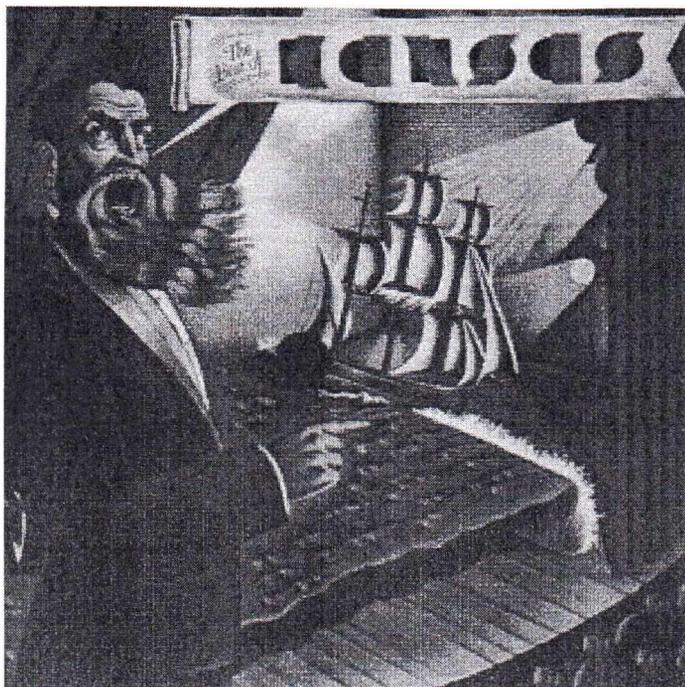
Label: Robbins

ASIN: B00005PJAS

Tracks:

1. *Sunchyme* - Dario G
2. *It Feels So Good* - Sonique
3. *Castles In The Sky* - Ian Van Dahl (feat. Marsha)
4. *Better off Alone* - Alice DeeJay
5. *Someone* - Ascension
6. *Toca's Miracle* - Fragma
7. *Not Over Yet* - Grace
8. *Kiss(When the Sun Don't Shine)* - Vengaboys
9. *I'm Not In Love* - Olive
10. *Nightmare* - Brainbug
11. *Can't Keep Me Silent* - Angelic
12. *Komodo* - Mauro Picotto
13. *Forever* - Dee Dee
14. *Let U Go* - ATB (feat. The Wild Strawberries)
15. *Airwave* - Rank 1

Okay, more electronica music you'll never hear on the radio (at least in most cities). Trance is the slower (relatively) and less intense sub-genre of electronica music. I enjoy this CD and will seek out the earlier volume for a listen. I did not much care for 9, though I love Olive. My favorite tracks were 2, 3, and 4. The rest were pretty good also. I rate this CD an A. ☒



### *The Best of Kansas*

Kansas

Audio CD (February 23, 1999)

Original Release Date: February 23, 1999

Number of Discs: 1

Label: Sony

ASIN: B0000015Y6

#### Tracks:

1. *Carry on Wayward Son*
2. *Point of Know Return*
3. *Fight Fire With Fire*
4. *Dust in the Wind*
5. *Song for America*
6. *Hold On*
7. *No One Together*
8. *Play the Game Tonight*
9. *Wall*
10. *Pinnacle*
11. *Devil Game*
12. *Closet Chronicles*

It's Kansas! The best Christian influenced classic rock band of all time. Tracks 1 and 4 are forever burned into my brain. The rest are good too. I rate this CD as an A.

☒



### *Classic Chillout Album*

Various Artists

Audio CD (April 23, 2002)

Label: Sony

ASIN: B000063CPK

#### Tracks:

1. *Porcelain* - Moby
2. *Here With Me* [Chillin' With the Family Mix] - Dido
3. *Silence* - Delerium
4. *Teardrop* - Massive Attack
5. *This Love* - Craig Armstrong
6. *Sweet Lullaby* - Deep Forest
7. *Stella* - Andreas Vollenweider
8. *Love on a Real Train (Risky Business)* - Tangerine Dream
9. *No Ordinary Love* - Sade
10. *Just Wave Hello (Ford Global Anthem)* - Charlotte Church
11. *Satie 1* - Endorphin
12. *Fields of Gold* - Eva Cassidy
13. *Rose {From Titanic}* - James Horner
14. *Saltwater* - Chicane
15. *She Cries Your Name* - Strange Cargo
16. *Jung at Heart* (From Volkswagen Commercial) - Master Cylinder
17. *Way* - Jill Scott
18. *Ascension (Don't Ever Wonder)* - Maxwell

An eclectic mix of easy listening music from a wide range of genres (electronica, R&B, soft rock, classical, soul). Track 2 (in another form) is the opening music for *Roswell*, the TV Show, which I love (both the show and the music). Tracks 9 and 15 also stand out but all of them are great for chilling out to a variety of music. ☒

ELTON JOHN  
GREATEST HITS  
1970-2002



*Elton John - Greatest Hits 1970-2002*

Elton John

Audio CD (November 12, 2002)

Number of Discs: 2

Label: Universal

ASIN: B00006RAKP

Disc 1 Tracks:

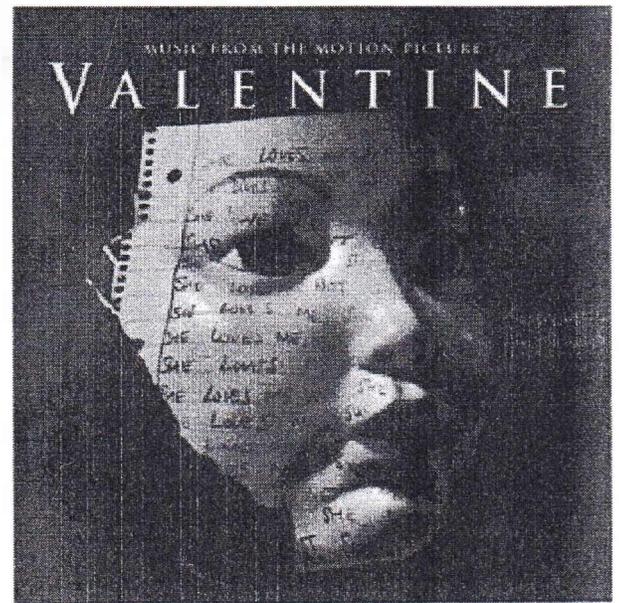
1. *Your Song*
2. *Levon*
3. *Tiny Dancer*
4. *Rocket Man (I Think It's Going To Be A Long Long Time)*
5. *Honky Cat*
6. *Crocodile Rock*
7. *Daniel*
8. *Saturday Night's Alright (For Fighting)*
9. *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*
10. *Candle In The Wind*
11. *Bennie And The Jets*
12. *Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me*
13. *The Bitch Is Back*
14. *Philadelphia Freedom*
15. *Someone Saved My Life Tonight*
16. *Island Girl*
17. *Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word*

Disc 2 Tracks:

1. *Don't Go Breaking My Heart*
2. *Little Jeannie*
3. *I'm Still Standing*
4. *I Guess That's Why They Call It The Blues*
5. *Sad Songs (Say So Much)*
6. *I Don't Wanna Go On With You Like That*
7. *Nikita*
8. *Sacrifice*

9. *The One*
10. *Can You Feel The Love Tonight*
11. *Circle Of Life*
12. *Believe*
13. *Blessed*
14. *Something About The Way You Look Tonight*
15. *I Want Love*
16. *Written In The Stars*
17. *This Train Don't Stop There Anymore*

Wow, what a genius of pop music (with even a SF theme or too). It even came with a third CD (not publicized) of four live recordings. Track 4 is haunting. Track 5 is fun. There rest are memorable. I rate this set as a B+. ☒



*Valentine* (2001 Film)

Various Artists - Soundtrack - 2001

Audio CD (January 30, 2001)

Original Release Date: January 30, 2001

Number of Discs: 1

Label: Warner Brothers

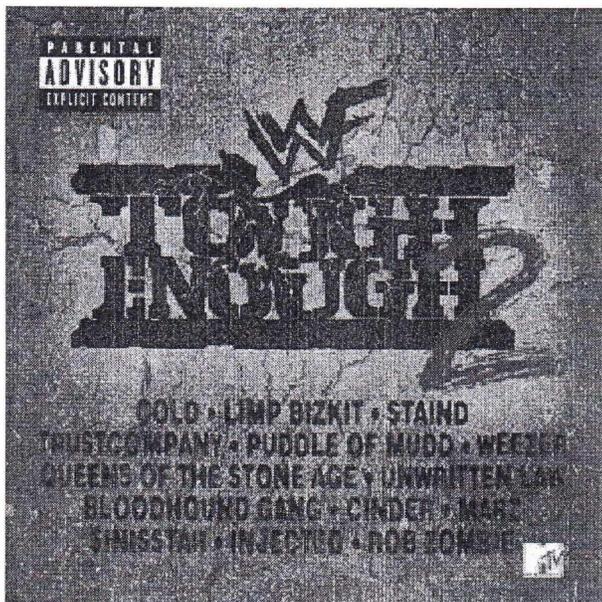
ASIN: B000056K2Q

Tracks:

1. *Superbeast [Porno Holocaust Remix]* - Rob Zombie
2. *God of the Mind* - Disturbed
3. *Love Dump [Mephisto Odyssey's Voodoo Mix]* - Static-X
4. *Pushing Me Away* - Linkin Park
5. *Rx Queen* - Deftones
6. *Opticon* - Orgy
7. *Valentine's Day* - Marilyn Manson
8. *Filthy Mind* - Amanda Ghost
9. *Fall Again* - Professional Murder Music

10. *Smartbomb* [Bt's Mix] - BT
11. *Son Song* [Not Included in Film] - Sean Lennon
12. *Take a Picture* [Hybrid Mix] - Filter
13. *Breed* - Snake River Conspiracy
14. *I A.M.* - Beautiful Creatures

I've not seen the movie (and do not plan to as I'm not a fan of horror films and I hear this one was not good anyway). However, this is an excellent collection of driving and dark Techno-Metal. I found them all equally pumping. I rate this CD as an A. ☒



*WWF: Tough Enough 2* [SOUNDTRACK]  
 Audio CD (May 14, 2002)  
 Label: Universal  
 ASIN: B0000668BJ

Tracks:

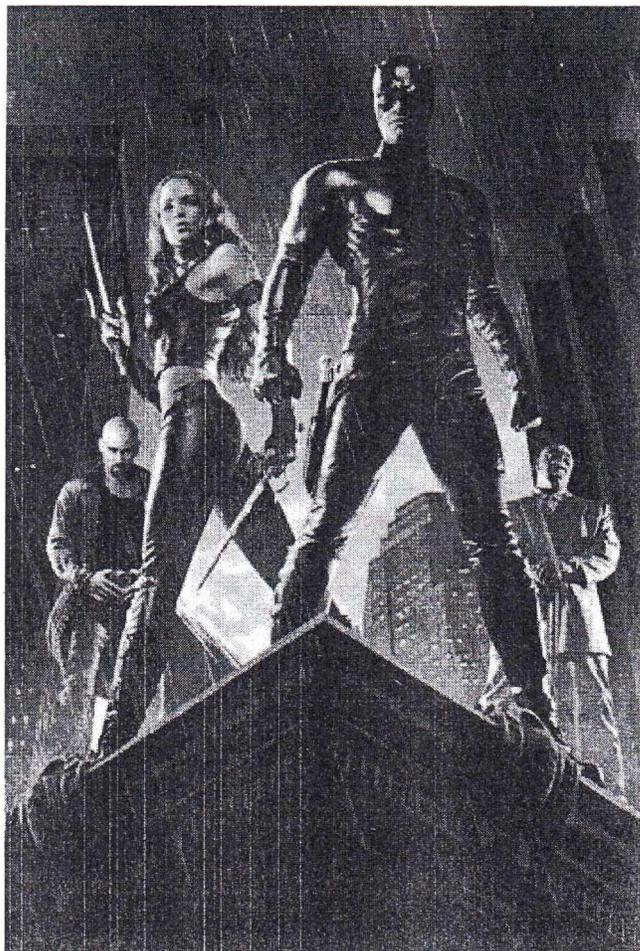
1. *Gone Away* - Cold
2. *Crushed* - Limp Bizkit
3. *Take It* - Staind
4. *Falling Apart* - Trustcompany
5. *Control (Acoustic)* - Puddle Of Mudd
6. *Oh Lisa* - Weezer
7. *Millionaire* - Queens Of The Stone Age
8. *Seeing Red* - Unwritten Law
9. *The Bad Touch Remix* - Bloodhound Gang
10. *Break Your Silence* - Cinder
11. *Out The Cage* - Marz
12. *Freak Of Nature* - Sinistar
13. *Faithless* - Injected
14. *Feel So Numb* - Rob Zombie

This is the second sound track to some stupid reality show about fake wrestler wannabes. However, the CD

is not too back with some good hard rock and fun songs. It is a little uneven though. I rate this CD as a B. ☒



## MOVIE REVIEWS



*Daredevil* (2003) [Science Fiction/Fantasy]  
 MPAA Rating: PG-13 for action/violence and some sensuality. 1 hr. 42 min.  
 Release Date: February 14th, 2003.  
 Starring: Ben Affleck, Michael Clarke Duncan, Jennifer Garner, Colin Farrell, Jon Favreau  
 Directed by: Mark Steven Johnson  
 Produced by: Arnon Milchan, Gary Foster, Avi Arad  
 Written by: Mark Steven Johnson  
 Distributor: 20th Century Fox

A bit of a disappointment after Spider-Man, but as a Daredevil fan, I give it a B. If I were not a comic book geek, I would give it a C. The comic pro cameos and Tuckerizations were fun. It borrows heavily from Frank Miller's writing of the comic book (with a scene that's a direct homage to one of his most memorable covers). I'll definitely get the DVD. ☒



## FICTION

### Pip Pinches

by Leana Justice

Her guinea hens gabbled and scattered, so Rook knew the province's Death Watch festival was underway. The province's first troop of musicians, the reeds, passed Rook and Reuben's open door, passed over the household's muddy chicken yard onto the deep purple grasses of Doubters' Marsh. High piping notes made the barn inside Rook kick and twirl. Spring festival and the dough not yet knead. Rook whisked eggs into the flour as bold horns sounded, challenging the sky that stretched over the hill beyond their house.

The horns summoned Reuben. He pushed aside their bed drapes and yawned, hair like a spilled brace of arrows. "Good morn, wife. Salt pork?"

"Porridge." Rook added milk from a heavy crock. "Festival."

Reuben blinked and pulled on his pants. He sat on the edge of the bed and laced hide shin guards around his hardened calves while the horns marched past. "Good day to honor those who guard our dead?"

"Won't rain." Rook spooned the thick white mixture into a loaf-sized pan.

"You polished it," Reuben's green eyes crinkled as he pushed arms into his metal-studded breastplate. He backed up so she could buckle his stays.

Reuben's eldest son leaned inside the house and blew a sour note at his stepmother and father. He jeered and rejoined the hornsmen parade. "See you all at the graves. Love you."

Reuben laughed and swatted Rook's bottom. "Pork?"

"Porridge." She pointed to the bowl and spoon.

"We've hardly eaten meat all winter," he protested around a hot mouthful. "I earn as much salt as the next guard; I don't buy a new ax with my salt allowance," he ticked points off his fingers as Rook fed Reuben's youngest, a girl of three. "I hunt every other moon day—for luck in future battles mostly, but there's fresh meat—and still you feed us eggs, stews, and squash and porridge."

Rook ran a comb through his hair. "You're talking to yourself, mate."

"What did you do with all our salt?"

"I used it." Rook tapped the comb between his eyebrows. "Up. Out."

Reuben took a crossbow from a peg above the door. He held it in his hands a moment, still as a way marker guiding travelers through the marsh wastes to the inland sea. "You'll attend this festival?" He tested the weight of the crossbow string. "Attendance isn't

mandatory for war widows and the maimed. The winners, they're good," he glanced at Rook from the corner of his beautiful eyes, "about understanding."

Rook bent and wiped the table with her apron. "They're good about winning." Another lurch from their baby made her burp, and the tension broke.

"They won the war and buried their dead with our own."

Rook sniffed. "Imagine the smell had they tried carting the carcasses home."

Reuben continued without pause. "Their salt is our army's pay. And today the province honors me and all the guards of our noble dead. Should be good for a few mead horns back at the inn."

Drums set the fireplace logs skittering onto the floor. Reuben replaced them quickly. Rook wiped soot from his hands.

"I'm going because this year the festival is so brief."

Reuben pushed a strand of hair behind her ear. He kissed her nose. "The guest speaker is from the palace court. He'll recall the most heroic dead from his point of view. Other days. The inn maid said the lord shall wear a very beautiful robe."

"I'll see for myself if the inn maid lies...about clothes. We already know she lies on 'em."

The first drummer entered the chicken yard. His drumhead shone like a copper plate. Reuben found his skull-hugging helmet and ruined the brushing he'd been given. "See you there, wife." He waved, then joined drummers and other death watchers on the trail through Doubter's Marsh, over the hill and on to the war cemetery.

Rook balled the cleaning rag in her fist. She turned to Reuben's daughter and said, "We know which 'saint' the young lord's speech will lift up, don't we?"

\*\*\*

For a temporary chariot, the lord's current conveyance lacked meticulous design and execution. Provincials were, as a whole, undesirable companions, but newly reformed provincials touching one's knees! Lord Hudderty suppressed a snort with great personal discipline for someone of his tender years. His Majesty's personal assistant gardener had presented a gift in remembrance of the late Lord Hudderty the Senior. With each lurch of the sluggard chariot, the magnificent plant from the royal greenhouse thrust dagger-long thorns into Lord Hudderty the Younger's neck and shoulder.

Lord Hudderty the Younger watched screaming marsh birds flee, driven from their wide treetop nests by the talkative, high-stepping crowd. He enjoyed the birds' blue legs and feet. The chariot was a two-man-wide rough-hewn box on two large rear wheels; four youths pulled the box by long pole arms. He smelled fresh paint and tested the green sidewall's

tackiness with his fingertips.

Lord Hudderty concentrated on his prepared speech while the box—it was a hearse, curse them!—squished toward its destination. A royal decree renamed Beck's Pip as Saint's Mount during last spring festival. He concentrated on rebirth, renewal, and new buds from old roots. He politely gritted his teeth and pulled his gold and blue striped outer robe into his lap, so the mayor/inn keeper could cross his flaccid legs. A fine crop of services, safety, and happiness. Crop?

The mayor cleared his throat, an alarming muddy sound, and looked at Lord Hudderty. The mayor was fat beyond reason. "Reap what is sown angle?" Heavy satchels of fat ensconced the mayor's eyes.

"Pardon?"

"Won't go over well." The mayor coughed and spat over the sidewall. "A tadpole like you talking about a harvest, when you are clearly in your rutting spring time."

Lord Hudderty smiled because he felt the exact opposite. His father had reminded him of that very lesson before marching to Doubters' Marsh. "Fear will strap onto your legs, lock your knees. That is the exact moment when you charge."

\*\*\*

Rook leaned out the door to see what a passing gaggle of wives wore; she pursed her lips and ducked back into the house. Braids in bun, hips in clean white aprons. Living so far from the inn and its smithy hampered her interaction with other wives. When Rook delivered milk with Ant—with her first husband, she'd met everyone. Now—done.

She lowered her arms and stared at her face rather than the blonde braids in Reuben's polished practice shield. Steady eyes, a high clear brow. She presented her profile. Good figure. Every day she walked over the hill and crested Becky's Pip to deliver lunch to the cemetery guardhouse, hail or thunder. The guardhouse was the last manned station before the marsh wastes. She'd feed Reuben and then walk over Pip to hill to hearth.

She unfolded a clean apron from her wedding chest and tied the knot securely. The apron proclaimed her pregnancy almost finished.

"Can't say I've been inactive," Rook told her stepdaughter. She lifted the toddler, set her onto her hip, and followed a rowdy pack of rakes toward the festival.

\*\*\*

"Fifteen men compose the province's death watch. Seasoned warriors with families. Well paid, the death watch protect war veteran graves from vandals and treasure hunters. From the shortsighted and petty. Each Spring, a spokesperson calls a festival to honor the living by explaining the importance of the dead. Lest we forget." Rook pursed her lips. This lordling was

too young for shaving. He plucked his whiskers. She let go her stepdaughter's hand and scratched beneath the baby.

"My father, Lord Hudderty, lies atop Saint's Mount. Therefore, these fine men who guard his grave, these soldiers of peace hold me in debt." The lordling rustled and walked down the assembled line and stopped in front of Reuben. Reuben sucked in his middle year's paunch. "Captain, my thanks." They shook hands amid applause and an impromptu blast from the horns.

"Together we will sow a prosperous future," the lad continued. He walked through the crowd; people stepped back to provide space for his stripes and loud words. "The time of sacrifice is over for all of us." He climbed Becky's Pip slowly, pausing every few feet to keep the crowd with him.

"Our loved ones' legacy offers us a rich harvest; all we need do is follow their example."

Rook puffed and pushed her way into the cluster nearest the speaker. She had to see his face, his young face at the first moment. Mud caked her boots, hindered each step, but she climbed. Her puffing masked his words. She saw him hold aloft a thorny plant, its blossoms like small, mean blue heads wagging in agreement to the lordling's words. She wrapped her hands around orange marsh lilies, pulled them up and put a musky bloom behind each ear. Life festooned, Rook climbed.

Steps from the crest the spokesman stopped. He turned to face them. The bush was as long as his arm, the purple marsh grasses knee high. Doubters' Marsh wanted to swallow him.

"I shall plant this royal gift upon the first Lord Hudderty's grave. Just as my father's strategy quickly ended our war, saving countless lives, this single stalk shall spread and multiply. Beauty begets beauty."

The innkeeper turned mayor struggled uphill; the mayor stabbed the ceremonial shovel into the hillside to leverage himself forward every three steps. The new blade was dulled. Rook bit her tongue to stop her teeth chattering. Everyone pressed forward to the top of Becky's Pip. The lordling dropped his bush and barked, "Captain."

Reuben advanced to the fore of the assembly but did not walk to the rigid Lord Hudderty. He also rested a casual hand on his knife hilt.

Bare peat. Barren peat first caught the crowd's eyes. After their march through tilled fields and the climb through grasses and day lilies, the empty rectangle burned their gaze. Soft fresh shoots decorated the bookend graves, but Lord Hudderty the Senior's grave sat baleful and exposed. Not a fern, not even moss.

Nothing would be grown; nothing could be grown. Rook felt everyone's shock like flood waters

under her skin. She wanted to burst the dam and spew and crow and dance. Let him cry, let him cry all the way home to the palace court.

Lord Huddertty laughed once, more bark than a laugh. A hard smile chiseled his lips, and his blue eyes--yes, he had his father's terrible eyes. He bowed, arms held like wings from his shoulders, like a striped heron. People pulled back, cautioned by inherent human nature and recent experiences to avoid contact with lordly ire. All withdrew but Rook who waited, rooted to her position atop Becky's Pip.

"Hard and patient work, this." He gestured over his shoulder.

He could not stand to look anew. Rook flushed. Good.

"Quite a...," his throat growled. He shook violently a moment before he ground out the compliment, "Quite a clever and extraordinary blow."

Break, Rook prayed; try the lie 'saint' on your lips now. Your father was a killer.

"I had no idea one could dishonor and hate the dead."

Rook allowed tears into her eyes. I had a husband. I will have my new family, new joys, and you will not have your sainted lies.

"...so methodical."

Your father's method was kill so that others may win. A saint's method is to die so that others may live in the truth.

"The death watch failed to guard all entry points to Saint's Mount. This matter shall be brought to the court's attention." Lord Huddertty's striped robes pulsed with his labored breathing.

Rook faced her neighbors. "We will leave Becky's Pip now." She pushed a few nearby settlers' shoulders. "Leave him to his sire."

Uncomfortable, people obeyed. They descended in silence, en masse.

Rook's light soles barely bowed the purple grass on the way home. ☒



## MAILING COMMENTS

### FOR SFPA 231

#### NED BROOKS

The New Port News 207

Suspenseful cover. Agree with your taste of modern cartoons. I miss *Invader Zim*.

#### JEFF COPELAND

TAFF 2003 Ballot

Thanks for the ballots. Unfortunately I missed the deadline. Where can I get the MAFF 2003 Nominating Ballot? ;-)

I Send Them Up

I really need to get back to DC one day and tour the museums. Thanks for the trip report. Talk about your omens, regarding the hawk devouring the dove. Thanks for the reviews. The most likely reason for not releasing source code is probably shame.

#### RICH LYNCH

Variations on a Theme 18

Brave of y'all to go out with a sniper around. I would have had room service. **Steve Hughes'** comment, "the old approach of stopping the enemy before he reaches our shores is a far better way of ensuring our security" could describe to the approach the Bush administration has chosen. Thanks for the *LotR* Easter egg info.

#### GUY H. LILLIAN III

rear-ender '02>>>

I hope the new year goes better for you. So there's a chance you are Tennessee bound?

Spiritus Mundi 193

Puppies are the key to world peace. I did not enjoy *Signs* very much as I keep looking for the "surprise". I was assuming that it was turn out to actually be the Rapture instead of alien invasion (where the aliens turned out to be demons). *Yellow Submarine* made my head physically hurt. Thanks for the kind comments of my first *Bulletin* and other comments. I hope no photos of me as Bacchus exist.

Guy and Rosy for DUFF

Congratulations! I'm glad my bribes to the SMOF Judges help *steal* the election for you. ;-)

Thirty

Sorry about your car accident. I hope you are okay.

## ARTHUR D. HLAVATY

### Hundred

Thanks for the descriptive phrases. I don't think I could come up with near that many.

## DON MARKSTEIN

### The Sphere

I dislike retroactively changing established comic book continuity, period. It has nothing to do with any bias toward the current gimmick of the moment. Steve Rodgers was a hero before he became Captain American because he volunteered for a potentially dangerous procedure to help his country. Now he's just a blond hair blue eye white bread boy who was in no danger because the evil racist American government is portrayed performing the same or worst medical experiments on racial minorities as Germany and Japan during World War II. Give me a break. I don't mind North Star is gay as it was not too glaringly a gimmick. However, making the Raw Hide Kid gay seems just that, a gimmick. I also dislike the revamped Superman (and hated the costume change but understand it was just a marketing gimmick). What's next, all the Disney characters, Donald, Uncle Scrooge, turn out to have been created by evil genetic companies striving to produce better experimental subjects closer to the human model?

Regarding the idiot who refused to donate to your site because of the Raw Hide Kid. Some people are just idiots. I get old calendars from people for photo reference. One lady at work informed me that after checking out my web site, she was not going to give me her calendars. I'm sure the cheesecake put her off, but she objected most to the logo I did for GAFILK (which is a take off on the Christ Fish Symbol / Darwin Evolution Fish). I explained that it was in no way meant as a condemnation of Christianity or endorsement of Darwin. It was just a punny logo for a convention of parody singers. She did not buy it. Some people minds are so closed they've walled over all the doors and windows and they become the Judge, Jury, and Executioner of all things (both liberal and conservative).

Regarding your concern with **Janice Gelb's** underwear. You're naughty.

## DAVID SCHLOSSER

### Peter, Pan & Merry 47

You like Don are also overly concerned with **Janice Gelb's** underwear. ;-) I just realized recently that

my (GASP!) 20<sup>th</sup> year high school reunion is next year. I have less than a year to lose a hundred pounds, grow hair on my head, marry a super model and make my first billion dollars. Condolences to Kay on the loss of her father. Sorry about the loss of Corky. I still miss all the dogs I had growing up.

## BOBYE GEORGE POULWETTE

### How to catch a Sasquatch

Prune juice is a warrior's drink to paraphrase Worf from *STTNG*.

## RICHARD DENGROVE

### Twygrasil And Treehouse Gazette 80

Hefty tome this issue. Condolences on your cousin Wayne's death. Interesting character sketches of your family. Speaking of stolen documents, my home state finally recovered our original *Declaration of Independence* stolen by the Damned Yankees during the War of Northern Aggression. The act of not giving oral sex could be called a "Mummer." The stupidest alternate history atomic bomb story I ever read (back when I was a teenager) was where "Anti-Nuke" peace activists travel back in time and kidnap Einstein as a baby and then travel further back in time and leave him with American Indians during the colonial days. The stupidity was that "Chief White Cloud" helps the Indians drive out the white man by inventing Nuclear weapons, which they use. Un-F'ing believable! Thanks for the comments.

## SHELIA STRICKLAND

### Revenant 16

Spring is here! Congratulations on your A. Welcome to the cruel bureaucracy that is Academia – the closest system to Communism, an American is likely to experience. Thanks for the comments. FYI: Big Spring Jam is in September but it is held around Big Spring (as in water) Park in downtown Huntsville. Thanks for speech. I wonder how it was received at the time?

## TOM FELLER

### Frequent Flyer

Nice seeing you and Anita at ConCave. I hope the house building has gone well. Congratulations on the writing success (i.e. paying). The Feast sounded

yummy.

## GARY BROWN

### Uncle Lon's Unofficial Box Scores 37

Ah, consistency.

### Oblivio 144

News keeping you busy? Hope you are feeling better. Thanks for the comic reviews. I regularly read *Promethea* also. Do you read *Powers*? Thanks for *Dave Barry's Year in Review*. Thanks for the comments.

## STEVE AND SUZANNE HUGHES

### Weird Stuff 2

25 cents a sheet! I'm inching to get an Epson color printer (for art prints). Cool toys! Glad y'all survived the blizzard!

## JANICE GELB

### Trivial Pursuits 105

I hope your back is better. Thanks for the reviews. Thanks for the *SFC Bulletin Ad*.

### Winter Wanderings

Thanks for the trip reports. Lot of traveling! It's a shame about SMOFCON site selection pettiness.

## EVE ACKERMAN

### Guilty Pleasures 27

Good luck with the writing. I'm also awaiting Ringo and Weber's *March to the Stars*.

## T.K.F. WEISSKOPF REINHARDT

### "Yngvi is a Louse" And Other Graffitos 81

Maggie stood still long enough for a photo! Wonder if anyone in the next issue will have any surprising (as in unexpected) comments on the war? Great seeing you at ConCave.

## GARY R. ROBE

### Tennessee Trash 51

Nice seeing you at ConCave, though you

looked different for some reason. Wow on the flooring project. Hope the rest goes well. Nice pun, "rings truer".

## NORM METCALF

### Tyndallite, Volume 3, Number 105

Thanks for the comments. Actually, Leana Justice did the review for *American Gods*. The *Bulletin* seemed like more work this issue than last. Hopefully that trend will reverse.

## MIKE WEBER

### Crude Joke

Better late than never. There seems to be a conspiracy keeping our zines from being timely. I hope things have gotten better for y'all.

☒



## FINAL COMMENTS

I did mailing comments twice in a row! Hope your spring goes well and your summer is mild. May peace come quickly and lastingly. See y'all at DSC. ☺

Sincerely,

Randy B. Cleary ☒

