

REVENANT #10

Revenant #10, January, 2002. Produced for SFPA mailing #225 by Sheila Strickland.
6204 Molino Dr., Baker, LA 70714 (225) 775-7048 sjstrick@concentric.net

I hope I'm not one of those tardy souls this time around. My usual last minute production is even later this time; but I'll mail this off tomorrow and cross my fingers. I was hoping to report on my starting of graduate school, but that's been pushed back until the fall. I'm disappointed at having to wait, but at least some of it is my fault for not taking care of some matters earlier and not harassing LSU to get their decision on my application. I could complain about my new boss; but it's useless to gripe here when I can compare notes with co-workers and swap tales of what she's done now. She's not intolerable, though; and if worst came to worst, I could go work at another library.

I do have to begin with an admission this time. I have succumbed to the lure of technology. I have purchased a notebook computer! I could blame it on one of my co-workers---she was looking to buy a desktop computer and discovered that Dell was offering free shipping and rebates on all their computers. I've been wanting a notebook computer and spent a few days saying, "I want one. I don't need one. But I want one." Greed won out, and it arrived last Friday. It's a Dell Inspiron 4100; almost the most basic; but it should be fun. I haven't even had much chance to play with it yet, so I'm looking forward to the weekend. One non-computer thing I'll be doing this weekend is going off to re-see a certain movie.

Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Rings

I first read *Lord of the Rings* when I was 14 years old. I had read some fantasy at that point, but this book totally blew me away. I had never read anything so absorbing, with such a complete universe. I heard and enjoyed the BBC radio version years ago. I saw and did not enjoy the movie version from the 70's. I wouldn't call myself a Tolkien fanatic, but I've read the book probably a dozen times over the years. So I had hopes and reservations when I heard of a new film coming out. As I saw bits and pieces and saw the first trailer, my expectations grew. My verdict---it's gonna be a loong wait until next December and "The Two Towers"!

I've seen it three times so far. My first viewing, I was remembering the book so intently that I couldn't watch it as a movie. I was unrealistically looking for everything in the book and I was disappointed that the resulting movie seemed so short! Those three hours zipped by. By the second viewing, I decided that Jackson had been true to the spirit if not the letter of the book and I was ready to love the movie for the movie it was instead of expecting a literal translation of the printed page. By the third viewing, I wanted to have a DVD of it so I could stop the action every so often to look at everything on the screen. And I want to see it again to try to catch all the little details others have picked up on.

There's one wonderful scene in the movie not in the book. It's at the Birthday Party as Bilbo tells a group of almost impossibly cute Hobbit children about his escape from the Trolls. One

little girl in the back row looks as if she can hardly keep from giggling as the two littlest ones in front (who according to the credits are probably director Peter Jackson's children) are wide-eyed at the thrilling tale.

Christmas in Canada

I went up to Toronto for Christmas this year. This was my first time to fly since Sept. 11, and I was curious as to how extensive and time-consuming security would be. It didn't seem all that arduous, though I suppose enough time had gone by that the most stringent regulations weren't in place. At the parking garages, they stopped all cars entering to check in the trunk. Only passengers with boarding passes could go through the security gates. As you boarded, you had to show a picture ID along with your boarding pass. Boarding passengers were randomly(?) stopped for more extensive searches and were gone over with the wand. All my flights were totally or almost totally filled, so evidently some of us weren't afraid to fly. I didn't even try to check out the other passengers looking for troublemakers. (The day after I got up there was the day the man tried to set off the explosives in his shoe.)

I spent a very relaxing week in Toronto visiting with my sister and family. I didn't do a lot of sightseeing this time around. Partly because I was too much of a wimp to get out in the cold catching busses and doing much walking. I also didn't want to fight the crowds doing Christmas shopping downtown. And I didn't want to make my sister do a lot of driving around when she had things to do at home. We did make it to St. Lawrence Market after Christmas to buy bagels. I also bought some purple rice at the grain store there---they had more varieties of rice than I knew existed!. Another day we went to Colburne Lodge in High Park. It was built in the mid-19th century by an architect for the city who first used it as a summer house, then later after his retirement lived there year-round. I found it mildly amusing that the summer kitchen was the one on the ground floor, and the winter kitchen was the one in the basement because the ground floor was too cold in winter! Houses of that time period around here would have had the summer kitchen outdoors to keep the heat of cooking out of the house.

And speaking of the weather, it wasn't extremely cold. Highs most days were near freezing and there was only a little snow. I borrowed sweaters from my sister and stayed warm most of the time. The exceptions were when we took the dog for a walk---most of me stayed warm, but my toes would get so cold they hurt, and my face felt frozen.

This was one trip perhaps I shouldn't have flown into Buffalo. The day or so around Christmas, Buffalo had seven feet of it snow! I was worried that I might not be able to get to the airport, or that the airport would be closed, but by the Saturday after Christmas when I was scheduled to leave, the airport had opened and all the major roads had been cleared. While I was waiting for my flight to leave, I was looking out the window at a earth moving machine with a shovel on it pushing snow around, and finally realized that it was a snow plow. "Ah, ha!" thought I, "so that's what those things look like!" Not many chances to see those in Louisiana.

Then I get back, and what happens on New Year's Day? Right, snow! That night, actually. It wasn't very much, and it melted by afternoon, but the kids made the best of it. I took pictures just to remind myself of this extraordinary winter in years to come. ✓

Mailing comments:

The New Port News/Ned Brooks: Aspartame can cause abnormalities? How well established is that charge? I remembering hearing something of it; but hadn't really paid attention to it. I'd like it not to be true since I use the stuff in hot tea and soft drinks.

A different language for "shrimp with grits"? Well, you could substitute "polenta" for "grits", though the two are not quite the same.

Ct Gary Robe on fingernail clippers. When I boarded in Buffalo on my way home; they looked through my purse and found my fingernail clippers, which I didn't realize were in there. I was allowed to keep them because they had no file with them. They were also in my purse when I got on in New Orleans, but they either didn't notice them, or let them pass.

It Goes on the Shelf: On page 19, you mentioned Lloyd Penney telling you of a "Brooks Books" shop in Mississauga. I looked for it in the Mississauga phone book while I was up visiting my sister and didn't see a listing; but perhaps they just don't have a phone. I didn't get around to asking if she knew of it; maybe next time.

Tyndallite/Norm Metcalf: Ct me on Hugo nominations. I wish I had the opportunity to read more SF short pieces so I'd know what to nominate. Access is a problem for me. The novels are generally available at the library; but the magazines aren't, and it's hard to find them on the local newsstands. I could subscribe; but I can't afford to subscribe to all the magazines that a Hugo-worthy story might show up in. I see that Asimov's and Analog have a web site that offers snippets of some of the fiction in their current issue, but a snippet is not always a good reflection of the whole work.

Ct George Wells on werewolves and fleas. Ah, a scientific discussion! As best I remember from werewolf movies one becomes a werewolf by being bitten by another werewolf. My question is, what happens when a flea bites a werewolf, then bites another human? Does the flea transform into a werewolf flea that bites only when the moon is full and bright? What happens to a human bitten by that werewolf flea? Inquiring minds want to know.

Twygdrasil and Treehouse Gazette/Richard Dengrove: Ct Ned ct me: An Irish Walk? What's that? I first thought of St. Patrick's parade, but why would the Scots be walking on the same day? Having mentioned St. Patrick's Day, I'll throw in that with Mardi Gras coming up this seems like a good place to reveal that around here, St. Patrick Day parades have a unique custom. They throw green beads (That's as in necklaces of green beads. Not just disconnected beads, right, Guy?) and cabbages from the floats.

Ct Tom re: 1812 Overture and cannons. Yes, they've used real cannons for the finale at some performances, and not as a joke; as a real part of the music. I remember seeing it as part of "A Capital Fourth" (from Washington, DC) on TV in past years. ✓

Ct Eve: A four hour study hall? Good grief, how much time did they spend in class? Or did they just spend a long day at school?

Challenger/Guy Lillian: Nice piece by Resnick on his Nolacon II toastmaster gig. I know I attended NolaCon II, and I'm pretty sure I attended the Hugo award ceremony, but it's all a blur by now.

Variations on a Theme/Rich Lynch: If you want suggestions on an opera to watch, I'd say go for one of the old favorites like "La Boheme" or "Carmen". Simple plots, easy to follow the action even though they're not singing in English, and familiar music.

Peter, Pan and Merry/David Schlosser: I would hope the slower mail service we've seen on SFPA mailings is just temporary due to the terrorism and anthrax scares; but wasn't it delayed even before? I'm terrible at waiting patiently for a mailing; as soon as I finish my zine and get it into the mail, I want my mailing! But I'd like to know where that wormhole between you and Washington is that swallowed your mailing and took it far, far away.

Spiritus Mundi/Guy, again: When I saw the cover, my immediate reaction was, "Where's the mermaid?" Though that's not how I see the Capt. Jack of the song. "Captain Jack and the Mermaid", that is; if you're not familiar with it.

I remember very few of my high school classmates. High school was not a fun time, and I was so glad to get out of there, I've deliberately forgotten about much of it. Once in a while, I'll run into one who remembers me---and I don't remember them.

You mention going to "the most haunted house in America". Do you mean The Myrtles, rather than The Willows? The Myrtles used to use that phrase in their adverts, though I thought I had heard they were trying to get away from so much reliance on ghosties.

If you're going to bug me at work, remember it's the Zachary library, not Baker. They're just a few miles road from each other, though. Baker has a nice, new, big library; but we'll have a new one within a couple of years.

I'm not sure when next I'll be in Canada---my sister was talking about coming down here next summer, so I may not be going there. I checked on Canadian postal rates and found some info on-line. Non-standard and oversize "lettermail" up to 100 grams is \$.96, over 100 to 200 grams is \$1.60, and over 200 grams to 500 grams is \$2.10. I suppose heavier would have to go as a parcel. Parcel rates vary according to where it coming from and where it's going. (If you don't think metric, 500 grams is over one pound.) Those prices are in Canadian dollars, of course; current exchange rate is about \$1.00 Canadian at \$.62 cents U.S.

Offline Reader/Irv Koch: Good luck on the job-hunting front. I'd hate to be looking for work.

Ct Guy on Charlotte's GoH: Tsk, tsk, taunting us with hints of what might have been, when you can't tell us who it would have been. Though maybe the same person would be a possibility for the 2005 NASFiC? Speaking of which, I haven't heard of any other bids for NASFiC 2005 and UK is the only WorldCon bid I know of. I've forgotten the procedures, but if the UK 2205

bid wins this year, wouldn't the NASFiC vote be in 2003? Could be enough time for another bid to appear.

Comments/Steve Hughes: Nice cover. Nice sentiments.

You mention using the "click flooring" and it being relatively easy to use. I've seen that advertised and wondered about it. I've been wanting to replace the flooring in my kitchen/dining area and that type of flooring looked like a possibility. It won't be anytime soon; but it's on my back burner list of things to do.

I tried going out to watch the Leonids, but couldn't stay long---just too cold that night! My house is badly situated for star gazing---too many lights nearby. I did see a few, though and it was a thrill.

Ct me on cable signal. It's fuzzy because it's too strong? And I thought (for some reason) that it was fuzzy because it was weak. It's fine on the lower numbers, but fuzzier as it gets higher. And with the Sci-Fi Channel on 59, I need clear viewing. I probably won't bother to try and fix it since the improvisational way I do it works well enough. It could well be the TV, too; it's fairly old. I'll be getting a DVD player this year, and I hope I won't need to replace the TV as well.

Trivial Pursuits/Janice Gelb: Congratulations on surviving the Sun lay-offs. It's got to be nerve wracking to wait for three weeks and wonder if you'll still have a job.

A steel needle in the eye? Ouch! I cringed just reading that. I hope the medication is working.

On your review of "Keeping the Faith", it sounds like the movie makers just had to have a happy ending, and didn't care too much how they got there. I've heard enough horror tales over the years about movie making to believe that the movie makers may have had laudable goals to begin with; but they were obviously sidetracked.

Ct me on housekeeping knocking on doors. What woke me up was the knocking on all the other doors along the hall. I don't remember whether I had put out the "Do Not Disturb" sign; possibly not since I had gotten in very late that night. Or maybe I thought she'd think I was due to check out that day, and wanted to check if I really was leaving. My hotel had the option that you could leave a sign for housekeeping to skip your room. I put it out once or twice, but one day that I did, they intercepted me in the hall and had me sign a list that stated I really didn't want them to come to clean the room.

Loved the "Boondocks" cartoon.

Ct Jeff on their new Saturn. I missed mentioning this to him last time, but I have a '94 Saturn SL (bought it new) which I've been very pleased with. I like it and the local dealership enough that my next car (hopefully still some time in the future) might also be a Saturn.

Avatar Press/Randy Cleary: Congratulations on the new car. As I told Janice up there; I've had a Saturn for almost eight years now, and have been very pleased with it. There's not a lot of leg room in the rear, and it may not be as comfortable as some for long trips, but for my purposes, it does very well.

Nice con report, but...you ate six deserts at Le Bec Fin? Small ones, I hope?

Frequent Flyer/Tom Feller: I would expect air travel to climb back up again. Revenues may stay low because of the cost of added security, but people will continue to fly. People may be

traveling for pleasure less than they were before Sept 11 (though you wouldn't have thought so on my flights around Christmas), but as the months pass, people will become less nervous and more willing to get back on the plane.

Home With the Armadillo/Liz Copeland: As I've said to a couple of people by now, I like my Saturn very much. The buying experience was made easy; and all the people I've dealt with at the local dealership have very pleasant and helpful.

Ct to Ned on armadillos: As I understand it, armadillos first came out of Mexico into Texas within the last century and just kept spreading. They haven't left any habitat they were in; they're just expanding it.

Ct Rich on DSC: I hope the Copelands do make it down this year---always nice to meet more of the group.

Ct Janice on computer directions vs. maps: I'll vote for the old-time map myself. I've tried the computer assisted driving instructions; and it always seems to want to send me out of my way the long way around. They can be useful for getting to a particular spot in your destination city, but for the overall view of how to get there; I'll spread out a map and look for myself.

That's an illuminating newspaper clipping you included. The artist wouldn't have had a chance around here. As I write this, there's a production of "The Vagina Monologues" playing in Baton Rouge. As it was first being advertised back a few months ago, there were several letters in the newspaper complaining. Not about the subject matter---about the title! The letter writers thought it tremendously offensive and pornographic. There are times I wish I had moved years ago!

Handcuffs and Peanut Butter/Jeff Copeland: You mention the national ID card idea. I haven't heard much of this lately. Dare we hope the idea is being dropped, or is it just not being talked about much?

I liked your take on government as "guys doin' stuff". I'm a government worker myself, and I get tired of the popular notion of government workers as lazy and incompetent.

Nice cartoon on page 15. It brings to mind a scene I found especially poignant during "Lord of the Rings". While the company is in Moria, I believe, when Frodo wishes that the Ring and the resultant responsibility had not come to him; Gandalf reminds him that every time "bad times" come, the people who are living then wish that they did not have to live through them. But just as there is always evil to fight; there are always good people to help you and to help you fight the evil. A good reason to appreciate your friends.

Yngvi is a Louse/Toni Weisskopf: Stuck in an airport with nothing to read and nothing to do: that is a horror story, for certain. Then more waiting. Airports can be diverting for an hour or so; but they get pretty awful after a while. I hope you've recovered by now and managed to enjoy your holidays. Now do you really want them to nuke Washington, DC and have us lose the Air and Space Museum? I haven't even seen it yet! (And I remember being enchanted by the National Gallery when I was there years ago. I bought a Picasso and a Rembrandt print that stayed on my walls until I moved here.

Charlotte's granddaughter is a child of sense to be afraid of clowns---I was when I was a child and I still don't like them.

Mysterious Destinations/mike weber: Informative article on beer although I've decided I'll never like the stuff---I've tried various over the years, including English and Irish brands, and none of it appeals to me I'll just stick to tea.

Ct Gary Brown about Bush hiding out after the attacks and the rec.arts.sf.fandom reaction: I guess I don't fit the pattern there. I have no military experience, but thought Bush should have stayed safe and secure at least until they were sure no more suicidal nuts were headed his way. I am no fan of Baby Bush, but we don't need our leaders being picked off by terrorists.

Re "Scaring Myself": I can relate to some of what you're saying about being incapacitated by strong emotion. I can stay fairly mellow most of the time; but if I get furious it can take me days to get over it. I never did get really angry at the events of Sept. 11, but I'm still feeling grief at the tragedy.

To end on a happier note, my cute cat story is occurring right now as I try to type with a cat in my lap where the keyboard should be. I'm holding the keyboard up in the air with my left hand, and doing my best to type one-handed. Spoiled? Not my Fiona.

Tennessee Trash/Gary Robe: You and your boys dress up for the premier of Harry Potter and you don't include pictures? Were the three of you the only costumed ones? I recall seeing pictures of audience members in various places dressed up. I wasn't quite as excited at going to see it; but I did enjoy it. I agree with you about the pace, though; they had to leave out so much. I would like to see the full version on DVD; I may have to get it when it comes out.

Congratulations on the red belt! I know almost nothing about martial arts other than what I've read in your zine, but I can see you've accomplished quite a feat. Good luck as you progress toward that black belt.

Ct Lynch: How could a school teach Beethoven's 9th Symphony, and not play it? Isn't that like teaching about the Mona Lisa without showing them a picture of it?

Ct Toni on Connie Willis: Did you remember that Willis is a guest at DSC this year? I hadn't remembered until I looked at a flyer a while back. I'm delighted---I think she's an excellent writer and hearing her read was a definite highlight at MilPhil.

Passages/Janet Larson: The babies are over a year old now? Doesn't seem that long. You need to run some new pictures of your cuties. If Cassia takes both ballet and basketball, I imagine each would help her with the other. I'm not a basketball fan, but don't they claim basketball players are more graceful than most other athletes at what they do?

On the fundamentalists believing that reading Harry Potter is a springboard to Satanism: I think some fundies are uncomfortable with any form of fantasy or fantastical creatures. If it's not in the (King James) Bible, they don't want their kids reading about it.

Portraits of Grief: I tried to read this several times, and I kept tearing up. Too much pain.

All Things Must Pass: Yes, but why so soon?

Guilty Pleasures/Eve Ackerman: You said Ralphie thinks Yale is like Hogwarts, but has he seen pictures of the old universities in England like Oxford and Cambridge? Now those are really old!

I'm looking forward to reading Pirate's Song. I enjoyed your first one, and I like the idea of a singing motif.

The Sphere/Don Markstein: You say you think Rachel is too young to be a mother; but on the other hand, that means she'll still be young enough when Nathan becomes a teenager to have the energy needed. Not to say that she doesn't need it now! Very cute picture, by the way. And teething already! I hope he's over the worst of it by now.

Oblio/Gary Brown: My sympathies to your cousin. Pancreatic cancer is a nasty one.

Your account of the stakeout of the AMI building sounds like a slightly bizarre comedy movie. I loved the image of the man driving by in a convertible with his hand over his nose and mouth. I don't think that would have filtered many bacteria! And the reporters interviewing each other must have given it a surreal atmosphere.

Bartland's Unfamiliar Quotations: This is going to take some reading. And pondering to pick out my favorites. I really like the ones by Jim Hightower, but there're plenty more goodies.

And to All

I see I've managed to crank out almost eight pages time around. I'll be interested to read people's opinions of Lord of the Rings; the threads in rec.arts.sf.fandom have been fascinating. I've even piped up a few times instead of just lurking as I usually do. Next time, we need to start talking about DSC. I hope to attend and see many of you there.