

REVENANT #11

Revenant #11, March, 2001 produced for SFPA mailing #226 by Sheila Strickland
6204 Molino Dr., Baker, LA 70714 (225) 775-7048 sjstrick@concentric.net

If it's March in Louisiana, it must be spring! Or possibly summer. After a last few blasts of winter, the last week has been more like summer than spring. The azaleas started blooming, then got hit by the last cold spell though some of them are coming back. The redbud is blooming around town, and I see many trees beginning to leaf out. I bought a few tomato plants last week, and will plant them this weekend perhaps. Earlier this week, I put in the oregano plant and the mint plant I bought at the same time as the tomato plants. If they live and thrive, I'll use the oregano for cooking and the mint for enjoyment. The basil seeds are still not planted; so maybe I'll do that this weekend as well. If I get really ambitious, I'll buy some eggplant or bell pepper seedlings so as to have fresh vegetables this summer. I'm eating mostly vegetarian these days, and a lot of the recipes I've tried and like call for eggplant or bell peppers. And fresh, home grown tomatoes are well worth the effort. The big problem I have with gardening is a lack of sun. My yard has big trees on the east and west side with the house to the north. There's a area in the middle of the yard that gets sun most of the day where the tomatoes will go in. The house is also built up on a mound of dirt, so that the ground slopes away from the house for several yards. It makes it hard to plant anything beside the house. One of these years, I'll put in some raised beds; but it doesn't look like that will happen this year.

Church News

As I mentioned a while back, over the last year or so I had become discontent with my church and with the Southern Baptist Convention in general. For the past year and a half, I've been attending Blackwater United Methodist Church. I like the church and the people there very much; in fact, the first time I walked into the sanctuary, it felt like this was the right place to be. I joined a Sunday School class and have been giving to the church general fund and the building fund; but hadn't officially joined until now. In February they offered a membership class for those like me---attendees, but not members. For a couple of hours one Sunday afternoon the pastor gave us an introduction to the Methodist Church and to Blackwater; then those of us who were ready to join trooped over to the sanctuary in time for the beginning of the evening service and went through the process. All of our group (about six of us) were members of one or another Protestant church and had been baptized already so joining was very simple. We pledged to support the United Methodist Church, and Blackwater by spiritual and other means and the congregation agreed to support us spiritually as members of the church family. It was nice to have done officially what I had done mentally months ago. In our packet of information about the church, we were given a list of organizations we could join or opportunities to serve in some area of the church. I'd like best to be in the choir, but they meet too early for me to get there after

work. The thought of teaching a Sunday School class is terrifying! But I'm sure I'll find something---or they'll find something for me!

Lord of the Rings, Again

Yes, I know I wrote about LOTR last time, but I haven't gotten the raving out of my system yet. I've seen it a ridiculous number of times so far; and I'm eagerly awaiting the DVD. Not only should we get some of the deleted scenes; but with the DVD I'll be able to slow down the fight scenes so I can see exactly what our heroes are doing. They move too fast for me to catch all the details on one viewing. It took me three viewings before I caught the glimpse of Legolas stabbing an orc with an arrow, then using the same arrow to shoot another orc. I also want to stop the action every so often to gaze at the gorgeous set designs.

Another benefit I discovered of multiple viewings was picking up all those little touches that made this such a good movie. One such detail occurs when Gandalf first comes to Bag End. Bilbo pours boiling water into the teapot; and as they sit and talk, you can see wisps of steam rising from the teapot spout. The movie makers took the extra effort to make it look real. Considering the time and care that went into building Hobbiton it wouldn't surprise me to learn that it was actual boiling hot water poured onto real tea in the pot!

I've haven't obsessed too much about how the other two movies will turn out; I'm confident Peter Jackson will do a good job on them. I do wonder, though, about the end of the story. Supposedly, the Scouring of the Shire is out; so that won't be the ending. I recently re-watched the Sci-Fi Channel special on the movie and realized that the dialogue Liv Tyler quotes in Elvish is from the end of the Aragorn/Arwen story as told in Appendix A. The end of their story is sad in that ends in death and an inability to accept that death. There is a theme of grief and loss that runs through the books; the Elves leaving Middle Earth; the Hobbits losing their innocence and isolation in the Shire. Jackson may well use that theme to end the movie. However it ends, it's not likely to be a "happier ever after" ending.

Not much other news so it's on to:

Mailing Comments

The New Port News: Ct me on armadillos: I thought I remembered this, and looked it up to be sure. The female armadillo bears four genetically identical babies in a litter (or whatever it is a group of baby armadillos is called).

Rear-End: 2001 seems to have been a good year for you all in all. The tragedy of September 11 was hard, but in a way it was easier because so many of us felt the pain and our shared grief was some solace. And then your high point was so high it must have elevated everything.

Variations on a Theme: On the Red Cross and their new rules on blood donations: Do you know why they used 1980 as their starting point? Twenty years seems like an excessive amount of time to guard against possible contagions in the blood. I would hope they'll push that date forward year by year, otherwise they'll be eliminating too many people.

You mentioned enjoying "Once in a Royal David's City" Have you ever heard the "Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols" done at King's College Chapel at Cambridge University that's broadcast on Public Radio each Christmas Eve? The program always begins with a boy soprano singing it solo and a cappella for the first verse; then he's joined by the rest of the choir. The other carols vary from year to year; but it's always beautiful music. I listen to it most years, but had to miss it last Christmas being out of the country.

Ct mike on CD to cassette converter: Yes, they exist. I heard one playing in a friend's truck once, and I don't remember any particular problems with skipping. Many portable CD players are designed for runners or people moving around and have an anti-skip feature built into them. I would imagine a car would bounce a player around less than someone running. I've considered getting one myself since my car has a cassette player and I'm getting more and more of my music on CD.

I certainly agree with you on the merits of Lord of the Rings. Neat movie. I'm ready to see it again. And again.

Derogatory References: Sorry to hear of your job loss, but I'm glad things seem to be working out better than they might have.

I read (or tried to read) *Double Fold* after reading a review of it in a library-related journal. I can sympathize with his attitude to some extent---I have enough pack-rat tendencies that I hate seeing anything thrown away. I like the idea in theory of being able to look at original materials; but information online is so convenient. For instance, my sister is doing genealogy research into our family. She can't check original sources that would be located around here since she lives in Toronto; but with all the info on the net out there, she can do searches while sitting at home.

I remember one of his complaints being that the preservation methods didn't always preserve the totality of the item---that they might leave out advertisements in a newspaper or that they used sloppy copying and missed important segments of print which is a valid criticism. I need to go back and read it all. Reading your comments and thinking about it here makes me think a good topic for a paper (once I get into Library Science School) would be on preservation of information and using Baker as a major source either repudiating or agreeing with him.

Oh, good, someone else who has trouble with pictures. I never can remember what those little pictures on the tool bar on my computer are supposed to be. If I want to print something, I go to the words that say, "file" and then, "print". And I remember the boredom of sitting in elementary school while the other students were reading...each...word...ver...y...slow...ly while I had already read the entire reader. And I still hate to be told something more than once. (Of course, I don't always remember it; but that's another matter.)

Spiritus Mundi: A possible move to Tennessee?! Oh, well, I certainly can't blame you and Rosy for wanting to go where the job prospects are better. And I'd rate Tennessee as a nice place

for relocating---a very pretty state from what I've seen of it. Are you looking at any area of the state in particular?

A nice set of New Year's resolutions there---good luck on keeping them. I've made resolutions a time or two in the past; some kept, some not. Usually not.

Ct Tyndallite on voting memberships in WorldCon. I thought that's what supporting memberships essentially were---but then they're not really cheap. If a voting membership entitled one to all the publications (the way a supporting membership does now); they would have to charge a certain amount just to cover the cost of printing and mailing; plus keeping track of those people for a few years.

Ct me on Highland Games. Slight correction there; the Highland Games are Scottish, not Irish. They may have highlands in Ireland; but they probably don't toss cabors there.

I had to re-type the Toronto report because the way I put this zine together; and also because it was "finished" but not really ready to print. I took the opportunity of re-typing to re-write it a little and correct a few things.

Sure, I'll be happy to write a Toronto piece for Challenger; just let me know when. Anything in particular you want it to include or just a "Louisianian's Guide to Toronto"? And what's this about Fiddle Faddle being Canadian? I've seen it in the stores here. Imported popcorn snacks seems a bit odd.

An SFPA party at WorldCon? I'm all for it; though I won't be at ConJose. 2003, anyone?

Twygdrasil and Treehouse Gazette: Ct me on our library's favorable rating. I'm not sure just what it is we do that gets us such support. I don't think they've ever asked "why" on the surveys, though it would be interesting to know why. Maybe it's just the totality of our services. We do have longer hours than many systems I've seen. All but the three smallest branches are open seven days a week; the main library is open until 10 P.M. five nights a week; and we don't cut back hours in the summer like some libraries have to do.

Tyndallite: I'm not sure I understand what you mean about "Forbidden Planet" being a movie and not SF. Can a movie not be SF?

Tennessee Trash: Sounds like a fun Christmas. I can understand the adults who wanted a Harry Potter quilt; I would have, too! Hmm, maybe I could hint to my sister (who sews) how much I'd love a LOTR quilt for next Christmas. I have the excuse of not making my own by way of not owning a sewing machine. Which I ought to remedy---I need some way of doing minor clothing repairs, even if I don't want to get into full-fledged sewing.

From looking at the picture of it the sign turned out nicely and was a thoughtful gift! I know I always like getting something that the giver has spent some time and thought on.

You mention Corliss having school-related nightmares---I still have those type of dreams even after so many years of being away from school. They don't occur very often, but once in a while I'll dream that I can't find the right room for my class that's about to start, or that it's time for the final and I realize I haven't attended class all semester. I assume these are general anxiety dreams, but it's funny that they should be clothed in school-related settings. My work-related

dreams are usually frustration dreams---it's time for us to close and the place is full of people who won't leave and more people are coming in. Of course, there are days when that's not too far off from reality!

Frequent Flyer: Sorry to hear of Anita's car accident; and grateful that she wasn't hurt worse than she was. I hope her knees are doing better by now.

What a rotten trip you had for January 2! As I said last time, I just missed getting caught in the severe weather on my Christmas holiday. I'm glad not to have been stranded up there; although I was enjoying being with family, I was ready to go home.

Ct Guy on Hobbit slash fiction: Oh, I'm sure it's out there. I haven't looked for it; so I can't swear that it exists; but considering that just about every character in (media, at least) fiction has been slashed; I'm pretty sure Merry and Pippin have not been spared. Frodo/Sam are a more probable pairing, though.

Peter, Pan & Merry: Ct Southerner on extra copy of confirmations form: Well, you could use the method I did---print out the online form. Not that I really care about being that complete!

Ct Markstein on jailed Christians in Afghanistan: I wasn't following the story closely, but I wonder if they really were "preaching" Christianity. One person casual reply to a question about religious beliefs could be another person's proselytizing. For instance, is handing out Bibles written in the local language missionary work; or just sharing?

I enjoyed reading the Disneyland report. I've never considered going there; but I have thought of visiting Disney World in past years. I've always decided against it because of the high prices and my dislike of crowds.

I pretty much agree with you on your points about LOTR. I also wished they had been able to give more "fullness" to the characters of Merry and Pippin. By compressing time the way they did; they were able to introduce Merry and Pippin during the Birthday Party, but "the lads" come out looking terribly irresponsible. Let's just hope that they are allowed to mature during the next two movies. I also didn't particularly like the way the movie handled Frodo on Weathertop. In the book, he managed to stab one of the Ringwraith's cloaks; I didn't like seeing the movie Frodo cower and retreat. As regards the filmed but deleted scenes, from what I've heard, some of them will be in the DVD out this summer.

Offline Reader: Good luck on job hunting, 21st century style. I hope a good job shows up soon. I see fandom will have to take a back seat for now. Earning a living does have priority.

The Sphere: I liked the Boondocks cartoon---I'll have to start looking for it online. The Baton Rouge paper runs "Mallard Fillmore" on Sundays. It used to be funny, and I still read it hoping it will be funny again; but it's usually just a rant against the evil liberals.

Nathan has a good grandpa to be so involved in "teaching" him. Reading to him sounds like a very Good Thing. We have a program at our library called "Lap Sit" aimed at infants and their caregivers. It's a 20-30 minute time where the Children's Librarian does songs, rhymes, and

finger plays. The babies get to crawl on the floor and look at each other; which they probably enjoy as much as the entertainment!

A catapult turkey dinner? Well, I guess it could frighten vegetarians.

Trivial Pursuits: Ouch on the toes! I'm very good at stubbing toes, though I've never managed to break one yet. I hope yours are healed by now.

Re your comment on LOTR and the orcs politely waiting for Aragorn and Frodo to finish their conversation: Obviously in Middle Earth, even orcs have a sense of dramatic timing!

You mentioned reading *God Bless the Sweet Potato Queens*. Did you read the follow-up? The title escapes my memory at the moment, but it has Sweet Potato in it. And did you try the Chocolate Stuff described in the first book? I made some a time or two; and while not as ecstatic over it as the writer, I liked it pretty well.

Ct me on being able to see LOTR on the second day: I made sure I'd be able to get in by buying my ticket ahead of time online. There was an extra charge, but it was worth it to be assured of getting a seat. I also could have bought one at the box office a few days in advance; but the theater is far enough away, that I would have spent almost as much on gas as the extra online charge! The performance I attended wasn't sold out; but then it was running on three screens at that theater; at two other theaters in town; and I attended a matinee on a day while school was still in session.

No, it was Mike I thought I might have met at CoastCon, not Tom. Tom I met while he was living in Jackson, MS. Tom was part of the SF group up there that I was friends with; and we met either at a con or up there when I was visiting some time. Back to CoastCon: we must have at least seen each other at one of those; but my memory has grown fuzzy about those days.

Ct Jeff ct Janet on sun all the time: Gee, it's good we're not all alike. I'd hate sun all the time! After a week or two of non-stop sun; I'm longing for rain. I seem to have some sort of allergy to sun or maybe just a sensitivity to glare. If I spend all day outside in the sun, I generally develop a raging headache. And humidity is just fine by me. (Good thing for a Louisiana resident.)

On the Geek Hierarchy: I have it on fairly good authority that SCA fans look down on SF fans. So, we might assume that the creator of the grid is not an SCA person.

Yawning in York: Oh, I hope that cover is not prophetic of me when and if I make it to England. Assuming U.K. in '05 wins the bid; I'll be planning to make the extra effort to finally get over there. I'll probably feel obligated to traipse through a few cathedrals; though judging from my experience in museums, I won't last long. I'm not one who can spend all day in a museum; a few hours is my limit. I'll have to vary my sightseeing---grocery stores can make for fascinating cross-cultural discoveries.

Your eating strategy in England is similar to what I did at MilPhil. My hotel included breakfast in the room price; so most days I'd eat much more at breakfast than I usually do; then last until an early dinner. It had the side benefit of not having to worry about fitting lunch in between those mid-day panels I wanted to see.

Would customs have been worried about any food or just fresh or uncooked items? I know I can't bring fruit back from Canada; but I've brought plenty of packaged items without trouble. Maybe I've just never read the customs declarations forms too closely.

Just a Page: I hope you've seen LOTR by now. As you can see by the responses last time; most of us loved it. I haven't gotten a DVD player, yet; but I should have one soon. The local Wal-Mart has the Apex 1500, at a very tempting price; though I had initially planned to get one of the models "Consumer Reports" spoke highly of and that received high rating from buyers on an online site. I'll have to check out the local electronic stores.

Oblio: I can relate to your not liking much on the radio---most of my favorite music doesn't get played on the popular music stations. The music I like shows up on "Prairie Home Companion", "Thistle and Shamrock" (Celtic music), or "American Routes" ("roots" music); all of them on the local public radio station. After the Grammys, I read that "O, Brother, Where Art Thou?" had sold extremely well despite having received almost no play on the country music stations. Not surprising as it doesn't really fit into the mainstream of country (or any other type) of music. I wonder if the popularity of that album will open up radio stations to play a wider variety. Maybe, but I wouldn't count on it.

Ct me: My name usually gets misspelled as "Shelia", though the sewerage billing insists that I am "Shiela". I used to wonder how someone could look at my name printed or typed out with a correct spelling and misspell it; though I suppose if someone is accustomed to seeing it one way; they'll automatically see it that way whatever the spelling actually is.

Random Thoughts: Thanks for the short course in how corporations work. From what I've read, Enron seems to have given money to everyone, Democratic and Republican.

Can't Believe Everything You Read on the Internet: I'm making a mental list of DVD's I want to see once I get my player. Our library has more and more; so I can start out borrowing them before I start buying. I'd enjoy seeing "The Prisoner" again and the DVD of "Buckaroo Banzai" sounds like another one I'd like to see.

You mentioned the Paul Thomas Anderson movie as being appropriate for torturing prisoners; I can suggest another one. If the trailer is any indication, the new Austin Powers movie could be just as horrifying. After having to sit through it several times while waiting for Lord of the Rings; I started closing my eyes and trying not to listen rather than have to see those images again.

Home with the Armadillo: So DSC is most likely out? That's too bad; it would have been nice to meet the Copelands. Another year, maybe?

You mentioned not understanding why the Hamilton books are in the Young Adult section in your library: catalogers are a mysterious breed! In our library system, some of the Terry Pratchett Discworld books are classified in YA, some in adult; and some in both. The question of vampires and holy symbols is one that's currently consuming the "Forever Knight" mailing list I'm on. They've discussed whether a sacred cow in India would affect a vampire, and how a vampire on that show can live in an old church.

Passages: I hope matters go well with the malpractice suit. I know most lawyers try to do a good job; but some insist on mucking it up for all the rest.

Guilty Pleasures: So you're getting encouraging signs on the book front; that's good news! We'll keep our fingers crossed. I'm looking forward to one day at work being able to pick up a Darlene Marshall title in our delivery of new books, and telling my co-workers, "Oh, yes, Darlene Marshall, I know her. Glad to see we've got the book in at last; she's been so excited about it coming out."

Ct me on cleaning coffee makers: that would be one way to try for decent tea; another might be to bring along an immersion heater. Have you ever used one of those? I used to have one and it worked pretty well. It's a coil of metal that you stick into a cup of water, then plug in, and it will boil the water quickly. Of course it won't make a pot of tea; for that you need a tea kettle. Tea made in the microwave is possible, but never does taste just right.

Avatar Press: Nice GAFilk logo there. If I lived nearby; I'd probably try to attend one year. I like filk, but I usually get distracted by all the other events at the big cons; and I can't stay awake long enough at night to attend the all-night filking.

Ct me: Yes, I plan to visit the space center in Huntsville. Right now, I'm planning to go there Monday after the con. First I thought I'd do it before the con; then realized I have a doctor's appointment the Thursday before.

Ct Toni re cartoons: I can't speak for the others, but I'd love to see more fannish cartoons from you. Especially as regards cons. Any of us can write a con report, but you can give yours a unique spin with cartoons.

The Werewolf is Napping: I hope the "vision thing" (to use a phrase of George Bush, the Elder) is doing better and your health improves in general.

Regarding "Buffy, the Vampire Slayer" and the show's lack of logic: I've tried to watch it a few times; but never have been able to get really interested in it. I think, though, TV makers just dump logic when they want to get on with the show. They seem to figure the casual viewers won't care and the real fans will enjoy hashing it out among themselves as to how it really could have happened. I don't mind minor inconsistencies and leaps of faith if the show is otherwise entertaining; but there is a limit! For me, "X-Files" passed the limits last season when Mulder died, was buried several months, and still came back!

Yngvi is a Wimp: I hope you've managed to get Tiger and Turtle to the vet by now. I almost had the reverse problem when I moved a few years ago. One cat and her full-grown Mama's boy son were outside when the movers came; and I couldn't catch them to get them to the new house. They stayed at the old house for a few months until Mama cat finally came inside long enough to be fed, and I managed to get her into the cage. Sonny boy stayed longer until I got a cat trap cage from the Animal Control center and baited it with food.