

REVENANT #6

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It's been a busy two months for me. Much more travel than I usually do and some changes at work. Our branch head librarian has left for another branch in south Baton Rouge. She'll be head of the Children's room there. It will mean a shorter commute for her; but we're not happy about it for selfish reasons---we'll miss her! It also means an increased work load for all of us just as we're getting geared up for our Summer Reading Program. She was scheduled to run the Young Adult section of the program---now I've inherited it. There's not that much work involved with it as she had set it up before leaving and we don't do near as many YA programs as we do events for children. I also got drafted to make the banners advertising the program that will be across the front of the circulation desk and outside on the side of the building. With help from one of our former student workers and a lot of muttering on my part; I've figured out how to do them in Creative Writer. If I can find the time, I'll go back and try it again in Publisher. Neither one of those programs wants to make it easy on you! The "help" function on Creative Writer, especially, is so basic as to be practically useless. It leaves out most of what I needed to know. There's probably an easier way; but I don't have the time to sit and work with the computer. I start on something, but then the phone rings and I have to take care of whatever because my (usually only two) other coworkers are already busy with patrons. Adding to the shortage one of our part-time people is out on maternity leave and will be so most or all of the summer. It's going to be an exhausting time until we get someone new. I still love my job and the Summer Reading Program can be rewarding with all the kids coming in and reading, but it's a lot of work for all involved.

Easter in Tennessee

I took a quick trip to Tennessee over Easter weekend. I flew up and my sister and her daughter drove down from Toronto to visit an aunt and uncle of ours. This aunt was my mother's sister and is the only living sibling of that family. She was widowed young and when I was growing up she lived in Baker with her two daughters who were about my age. I spent a lot of time with them and she was the favorite aunt of all of us. When I was in my teens, she re-married and moved out-of-state, but she remained a favorite. She and her husband have not been in the best of health in the last year or so; one reason my sister and I wanted to make the effort of seeing them.

I flew into Nashville on Friday (they live in Murfreesboro, which is a little south of Nashville). Flights were crowded, but smooth and uneventful; and we actually got into Nashville about 1 p.m., which put us a few minutes ahead of schedule. My sister wasn't

there when I got in; but I hadn't really expected her to be. Virginia and Alison were making a two-day trip of the drive down and I didn't know just when to expect them. I waited awhile, then called my cousin who lives in Nashville. Kathleen had gotten a call from my sister on her (borrowed from her husband) cell phone that she was in Gallatin and on her way. I could have called her since I had the number, but decided if she knew I was there we shouldn't have much trouble finding each other. The Nashville airport is big enough, but not as large as all that.

Of course, we did find each other easily, as soon as she got there; and proceeded to my cousin's house in Nashville. My sister's trip had been more exciting than mine. They had gone through Cincinnati (on one of the curfew nights), and encountered construction most of the way---one reason they were as late as they were. When we got to my cousin Kathleen's house, her daughter Bonnie (who's sixteen months younger than Alison's almost 12 years) and friend had just finished dyeing hard boiled Easter eggs and tying plastic Easter eggs to the tree in the front yard. We sat around and visited for a while as Kathleen hemmed Bonnie's Easter dress, and as Bonnie demonstrated her piano playing ability, then went outside to admire the yard. Her house is not large, but comfortable and welcoming and the yard has lots of big trees and flowers. The neighborhood is fairly old, so most houses have trees and established greenery. Bonnie's friend's father came to pick her up, Bonnie's father (my cousin's ex) came to pick her up, and we planned to pick up supper and head south to Murfreesboro.

On the way out of Nashville, Kathleen lead us on the scenic route, past huge houses, all with dogwoods in bloom. Dogwoods don't grow well around here, but up there it seemed they used dogwoods the way we use azaleas around here---everyone has them, and when they're in bloom, they are gorgeous. Another bit of exotica for me was all the rocks! I spent some time on the drive marveling at the rock faces that the roads were cut through. (See, in Louisiana, if you dig down, you get clay, then water. No rocks. So for me big rocks are exotic. Easily amazed, aren't I?)

One thing we were trying to do this weekend was to keep Aunt Verna Mae from doing too much cooking and housekeeping. To that end, we stopped at a Cuban restaurant (The Calypso Cafe---know it, Tom?) to pick up food. We almost had a mini adventure as we left the restaurant when we lost track of Kathleen's car, and realized we didn't know where we were or exactly how to get to the house. Virginia thought she knew how to get to Murfreesboro; the trick was getting out of Nashville. Luckily, I had a map I had picked up at the airport while waiting for Virginia and Alison; and luckily we were on a main highway. With not a lot of trouble, we found the interstate going south. Kathleen had given Virginia directions for getting to the house from the interstate; but we weren't sure just which exit we should take. About the time we took the exit we thought might be the right one, Virginia noticed a car just ahead of us that looked a lot like my cousin's car. It was dark by now, so we couldn't see the driver very well, but the car was taking all the turns that we needed to take---we said, "That's her!", and followed along behind. (We had been up there a couple years ago, but neither one of us had perfect recall as to all the turns.)

We didn't worry about getting in too late, as Verna Mae and Reece stay up late and sleep late. So we visited while we ate a late-ish supper of chicken, bean salad, sweet potatoes, greens, and rice. Dessert later was Girl Guide (that's a Canadian Girl Scout) cookies. All of us travelers were very tired, and went to bed by 11 p.m.

Virginia, Alison, and I shared the upstairs---a bedroom with king-sized bed and sleeper couch, plus a full-sized bathroom. I don't always sleep well in strange places, but I had had very little sleep the night before and had gotten up before 4 a. m. to make my 7 a.m. flight. I was zonked, and went to sleep right away.

Next morning, we got up at our leisure, ate a bit of breakfast then Kathleen, Virginia, and I went grocery shopping. My aunt already had a ham, so we bought some vegetables and a cornbread mix. We dropped the groceries off at the house; collected Alison, and drove over to Stones River Nature Center. There was a Civil War battle nearby and there's a park to commemorate it but we went to the Nature Center alongside the river. It was a nice day to be outside, warm and muggy, but cloudy enough that the sun wasn't a problem. It was a pleasant place to walk with the river alternately roaring or gilding next to us. We strolled for a ways, then turned back, so we could go home and fix lunch.

Lunch was a lasagna my sister had brought down in an ice chest. It was almost defrosted by the time we put it in, so lunch wasn't later than 2 p.m. or so. After which time, events slowed almost to a halt. My sister had been suffering from allergies ever since she got to Tennessee; and started feeling worse, and coughing badly. Her husband had just gotten over having bronchitis, and she was worried she was getting it. Whatever the trouble, she went to bed after lunch and stayed there. Alison, too was feeling ill, and running fever. I was feeling the effects of all the pollen in the air, but otherwise felt fine. I spent the afternoon reading *The Thief of Time* by Terry Pratchett. It's his latest, and I had been very pleased to get it in the mail the day before I left.

It rained early the next morning; which meant my aunt and uncle wouldn't be going to church. Both have trouble walking and don't like to go out when the ground or pavement is wet. My sister was feeling better, but Alison was still unwell and Virginia didn't want to go off and leave her; so none of us made it to church.

Lunch was a group effort---my aunt made smothered squash, I figured out how to bake the ham and cornbread, and we all worked on the potato salad. My cousin had left early that morning, but came back with her daughter; and Bonnie and Alison compared Easter baskets. They had a good time with each other; and eventually Alison felt well enough to get off the couch and eat dinner.

The rest of the day was spent socializing and watching the video "Bedazzled". Not a great movie, but entertaining. It's a variation on the three wishes tale. A man sells his soul to the Devil---in this movie the Devil is a beautiful woman---in return for seven wishes. Of course, the catch is that he gets exactly what he wishes for. So when he wishes to be rich, powerful, and married to the woman he has been admiring from afar; he becomes a Colombian drug lord, with a wife who hates him.

My flight was scheduled to leave at 9 a.m. Monday morning. We figured that leaving about 7 a.m. would give us plenty of time to get there. Almost. There was rush hour traffic and construction on the interstate which wouldn't have mattered much if we hadn't picked the wrong way to turn when we exited the interstate. After several blocks, I looked at the map and panicked when I realized we were heading away from the airport. I'm one of those people who likes to be at the airport an hour before the flight is scheduled to leave, so when it was an hour before and we weren't anywhere near the airport, I was not happy. Fortunately, the distance was shorter than it appeared on the

map, and we got there in plenty of time. I said good-bye to Virginia and Alison and started home.

Music and Sun in New Orleans

The last weekend in April was time for another ritual of mine---Jazz Fest. For those of you unfamiliar with it; that's the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. It's always held on the last weekend in April and first weekend in May on the racetrack fairgrounds in New Orleans. The music is not just Jazz; there's Gospel, Cajun, Zydeco, Blues, plus a few other genres. And it's not just music, but crafts---traditional and modern; mostly Louisiana artists, but some from around the world. And food---crawfish in any form you can think of. White beans and rice. Macque choux (that's mostly corn and bell peppers). Snow cones (very nice on a hot day). Barbecue chicken. Lots of good stuff!

I've been going down on the first Friday of the Festival for years; this year I also went down on the first Sunday. The crowd was estimated at 70,000 for that first day, and I can believe it. Lots and lots of people. Lots and lots of sun. The only way I survived was that the humidity was low; and the festival organizers had the "mist tent" up again this year. That is just what it sounds like---an open-sided tent with mists of water sprayed down from the roof. It wasn't working very well Friday, but on Sunday when I went through, it was more like a stream. The water plus the breeze from the nearby pond cooled me off real well.

I wound up not seeing any of the big-name acts. Beausoleil played Friday evening just as I was leaving (I had to get back for a meeting Friday night in Baton Rouge). I didn't fret over missing them though, as I got to hear the Savoy-Doucet Cajun band Sunday afternoon. Michael Doucet plays in both bands; the difference being Savoy-Doucet concentrates more on the old-time traditional Cajun music, and Beausoleil plays more "modern" Cajun music. On Sunday, I attempted to go see Doug Kershaw, but the crowd was just too thick for me to stay. Instead, I listened to James Andrews, billed as a Blues musician, but playing more what I'd call New Orleans rhythm and blues. Marcia Ball played Sunday evening, and I had thought to see her, but the sun and heat were getting to me, and I left to go home to the air-conditioning.

Deep South Con 39/Tenacity I

I hadn't fully recovered from Jazz Fest before it was time for Deep South Con. I was not very hopeful about this convention. I hadn't received any mailings, although I had bought my membership two years ago; and it was only a month or so ago that I found any information about it on-line. (Someone said at the con that they did have a website, but that it was difficult to find.) I was somewhat reassured when I made my hotel reservation and the clerk knew what convention I meant; but I still didn't know how the con itself would run. With some trepidation, I left home early Friday morning.

The trip over had a few minor annoyances, but happily nothing serious. The worst part of it was that I couldn't find a place to eat when I was ready for lunch. From Jackson, Mississippi, until well after I got into Alabama all I could see for miles and miles was trees and more trees with not many exits. Very nice and green, but what I wanted was fast food. I did finally find a Subway Sandwich shop attached to a gas station. Insert here the obvious joke, and the food wasn't great; but I was in no mood to be picky. It was food, of a sort; I was hungry and I ate it.

I had estimated the driving time would be about seven hours, so to help pass the time, I borrowed the recorded version of Connie Willis' *To Say Nothing of the Dog* from the library. It's a book I like, and I thought the humor would help me cope with the boredom of the road. Worked pretty well, too; even the construction on I-29/59 didn't faze me (much). As I got into Birmingham, I realized the directions for getting to the hotel (off its website) were given with the assumption that the driver would be coming in on I-65. I was on I-29/59; and although I passed the intersection of I-65, I didn't know whether I should get on I-65 N or I-65 S. As I pondered that, I noticed an exit for 22nd St. "Here's an idea!", said I. "I'll just get off here, go two blocks over to 20th St. where the hotel is and I'll be sure to find it!" Amazingly enough, even with my lack of ability to find the obvious or figure how to get somewhere in a strange city, I made it.

A word or two here about the convention facilities---very good. The elevators worked all weekend and didn't break down even once! The ice machine on my floor had plenty of ice all weekend! Most events and programming was on the level below the lobby (which put them on the ground floor). The convention facilities consisted of meeting rooms arranged around three sides of a large open area with chairs and sofas that functioned almost as another con suite. The fourth side led to registration and the rest of the hotel. The lobby level (the second floor) held the video rooms, and several suites where parties were held. The suites opened out onto the pool and terrace, which made a nice overflow area for parties. The con suite was on the 14th floor. Merlin Odom ran it, and did a super job. There was continental breakfast in the mornings with traditional snacks during the day and the occasional extras like bagel bites or pizza rolls.

My hopes for the con went up a little more when I was able to pick up my badge and program book right away. I recognized a couple of fans from New Orleans---Robert Neagle and Joe Grillot. Later, when I went up to the con suite I was able to introduce myself to Guy and Rosy--- the first of my fellow SFPAns I was to meet there. When I looked around the Dealer's Room I was happy to see several books dealers in a not terribly big room. The Art Show was in an even smaller room, but again, had some good pieces. I attended one panel that afternoon---it began with the panelists outnumbering the audience, but as it went along more people trickled in. The topic was something to do with changing gender roles, but details of what was said escape me at this point. For dinner instead of going out to eat, I dined in my room. I was trying to save some money, and had brought along a few items for light meals..

Opening ceremonies began in the area outside the meeting rooms. The first item was a local dance troupe, doing a modern dance piece. Very pretty. The dancers wore flowing draperies reminiscent of Martha Graham or Ancient Greece. It was certainly a different opening to a con. After the dancers was a more traditional opener---a bagpipe band. Again, a local group; they played "Scotland, the Brave" plus a couple more pieces. Afterwards, we all went into the main meeting room for the introduction of guests. There

were lots of guests, and I won't try to remember all of them, but the one we here are most interested in was Ned Brooks as Fan GoH. Catherine Asaro was Literary GoH, and Sharon Green was Toastmistress.

Once all that was over, we started in on the really fun stuff--like parties! I made the rounds that evening. Naomi Fisher did her usual wonderful desserts and I did my best to make myself sick on the wonderful raspberry cheesecake and the Key Lime pie. I didn't last very long, however, and headed to bed shortly after midnight.

Next morning, my main interest was the one-shot, which will be included in this mailing. There were two laptops set up in one of the meeting rooms and quite a number of people; thought I don't know how many ended up contributing. I was one of the early typers, so I haven't seen any of the rest of it; and can't swear as to my coherence. A plus here was meeting several more SFPAners. As I left off typing and walked off the platform, I demonstrated my innate grace by tripping over the laptop cord and almost falling down. I *think* what had been written was saved despite my klutzhood. After this, I decided it was time for a real meal.

The con didn't publish a restaurant guide, but did have a collection of menus from nearby eating places. I looked them over and selected The Fish Market Restaurant, just a few blocks away. I was pleased with the choice---it turned out to be an interesting combination of Greek, Louisiana, and general southern cuisine. I had grilled shrimp with rice, with sides of fried okra and green beans. It was good, too; had they been open Sunday, I might have gone back.

Back at the hotel, the main bit of programming for the afternoon was the Ned Brooks roast. Except that it wasn't exactly a roast. Everyone agreed that they couldn't think of anything terrible to say about him. George Wells read a spurious autobiography of him sent to him by... (and I'm blanking on the name, so I hope someone else remembers.) They did talk about his staple collection, though.

So after all this nonsense of sitting in panel rooms, we returned to the real reason for being there---socializing! The Robes invited people back to their room for drinks. Gary made delicious and potent drinks from a Brazilian alcoholic something or other made from sugar cane (?). We sat around and talked there for a while, then headed for Steve and Sue Francis' room for a Kentucky Derby party featuring mint juleps. (I'll stop and apologize here if I'm getting names wrong. My only complaint about the con was that the print on the badges was too small. You practically had to lean your forehead against the other person's chest to read their name; and while that may have led to some new friendships; I really prefer to be able to casually glance over at someone to remind me of their name. So, while some of you have known each other for 20 years, remember I'm still new at all this and still trying to sort you all out!)

The actual race part of the Kentucky Derby is very short; so they have to fill air time with features and commercials. As the features dragged on and on, and the room got more crowded; I went to sit outside on the terrace. We were lucky in that the weather was cool enough so that even in mid-afternoon, you could be outdoors on a concrete terrace and be comfortable. People drifted in and out as the chat covered this and that. Eventually, the race was ready to start, and I went go in to watch it. I know practically nothing about horse racing, but I could see that the horse who won did an amazing feat. It looked like he turned on the warp drive and zoomed on down the track.

After the party, I was feeling the effects of the alcohol and the over-eating and decided to go back to my room for a while. I tried to lie down to rest while listening to "A Prairie Home Companion" on the radio, and fell asleep for a few minutes. Just a few minutes, though; and when I woke up, I was ready to see people again. It was time for the art auction and charity auction; but I stayed away---my money was short; and it would have been too tempting to bid on something. Instead, I sat around with other fans in the area outside the meeting rooms. I particularly enjoyed hearing two fans describe their trip to Australia. It all sounded wonderful; especially when they described the supermarket with the loong aisle devoted solely to Cadbury chocolates! That was enough to make some of us ready to pack and head far south right away.

I wanted to see the Masquerade scheduled for after the auctions, but it was canceled, due to lack of entrants. Most of us who were waiting for it hung around in the meeting room, waiting for the Awards Ceremony. The Phoenix went to Sharon Green, Toastmistress, the Rebel to Steve (didn't catch his last name), and to Robert Neagle; and the Rubble to Steve and Sue Francis. And after that, it was time to party again! At this point, my memory and notes fail me; because I'm not sure which parties I saw Saturday night. I passed briefly through all of them, I think; but didn't stay very long at any one place. I did get to the DSC 40 party long enough to buy a t-shirt (nice work, Randy!) and a membership. Again, I didn't stay up very late, and retired to my room by midnight.

Sunday morning, I woke up before the clock radio went off; so decided to go ahead and pack and check out so I could leave relatively early. I finished all that in time to go up to the con suite for breakfast; then back down for the SFC Business Meeting. All the officers stood for re-election and were re-elected. Nothing major to discuss; and it ended in plenty of time for the 2003 Site Selection vote. Liberty Con (of Chattanooga) was the only bid; and after bunches of questions, they won the selection. I went across the street to a bagel/sandwich place for lunch; then headed home. I would have liked to attend the Closing Ceremonies, but I wanted to get started on that long trip home. It was a nice, if long, uneventful drive back. I listened to more of the Connie Willis book and wished for more cloud cover. When I got home, the cats were unimpressed that I was back, and only eager to get out onto the porch.

Mailing Comments

Tyndallite: Ct Rich: I enjoyed reading that bit of Denver fannish history. Your mention of Camille Cazedessus, Jr. reminded me that I met him briefly some years ago when he was living in Baton Rouge. I think he was pretty much out of fandom by then; but he had been part of the Baton Rouge fannish scene, such as it was, in the 70's. I met him through Clay Fourrier, who had been a friend of his from long back; and who was then a member of the Baton Rouge Science Fiction League (which is where I met Clay).

The New Port News: Nice to have met you at DSC. Another neat cover! I seem to remember reading somewhere or the other that the proper way to ride a broomstick is the method illustrated---that the bristles should be in front, not behind. Not very aerodynamic, perhaps, but maybe magic doesn't worry about such things!

Ct to Hlavaty about animals not being able to “see” photos. Don’t people have to be taught to see them, too? My foggy memory is bringing up a recollection of an anthropologist saying how a group of “primitives” who hadn’t seen photos before couldn’t see that those flat things were images of people.

Ct Brown about printing. I’d like to have another option of printing this zine, but I haven’t come up with a convenient one. The only Kinkos or Office Depots or the like are in the south part of Baton Rouge, probably a 30 minute drive from here. That’s just not practical to do on a weekday; and to get it done on the weekend; I’d have to get it finished earlier than I usually manage.

Ct Janice about the “Bouncing Potatoes” song and you looked it up? Tsk, tsk, you’d never make it in a newsgroup. One newsgroup I read recently had one contributor mock chastising another for looking up a point under discussion instead of just arguing about it. That’s one reason I get tired of usenet. A question will arise as to the correct wording of a line in a book or poem; and rather than stopping to check it out, people will just argue it back and forth for a while.

Ct Robe about the meat industry: The more I learn about the meat industry; the less I want to eat meat. The dangers of beef have been more widely publicized of late; but most meat-raising industries aren’t a lot better in terms of health. If I had real sense; I’d become a vegetarian.

Challenger sub-micron: It was nice to have officially met you and Rosy. I’ve been going to cons long enough that I’ve seen you around and knew who you were; but I don’t think we actually ever “met”. Thanks for the Hugo suggestions. It’s too late for nominations; but I’ll look at your list before I fill out my ballot---and try to remember them for next year. I’ll be trying to make a reasonable effort to read some of the nominations this year. And speaking of Hugos---congratulations, again!

Variations on a Theme: I enjoyed the series “Jazz” as well. I didn’t know much about it; and appreciated hearing about its origins. Sure, it left out a lot; but it was an overview, and designed for the nonknowledgeable. Is there a book out associated with it? I would expect it to go into more detail and mention some of those musicians who were left out of the TV version.

The only Wynton Marsalis tape I own is one with him and Kathleen Battle(?) doing several Baroque pieces. Beautiful music. An amazing voice and an amazing trumpet player. I just went to look for it and of course, couldn’t find it. Very annoying, as now I really want to listen to it again. And not to forget ---congratulations to you and Nikki on the Hugo nomination!

As We May Think: Interesting bit of science fiction not published as science fiction. Though not really SF--Bush was speculating and predicting, not writing a story. I wonder if any SF writers of the time read the piece and used the speculations in a fiction piece of their own? Do you know whether he’s still living; or did he at least get to see some of his speculations turn into reality?

Ct Rear Ender re “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.” I haven’t been to see that one, yet; and I would like to. I heard some friends discussing it recently and it sounds like a movie I’d like to see.

Spiritus Mundi: What a bummer to lose your wallet on Mardi Gras. I'd heard other people that have lost a wallet say that the hassles of replacing credit cards and licenses just made the loss worse.

Ct Variations re Terry Jeeves as fan GoH at next British WorldCon. UK is bidding for 2005; so now is the time to start suggesting. As of now, they're the only serious bid; so I've marked my calendar for '05 as being the year I finally get over there.

Ct Fantasy and Reality re JWRTFM bumper sticker. Haven't seen it myself, but I assume it stands for "Jesus Would Read the Friendly Manual"---a variation on the computer user exhortation to, "Read the Friendly Manual"---"friendly" being a variant phrasing of the original wording.

Offline Reader: Sympathies to Kay on her medical problems. I'm always reminded how lucky I am that I don't have to take lots of different meds. I do hope she has at least one doctor who's keeping good track of all she's taking.

Well, I'm not familiar with Myraid. Heard of it, but that's about all.

Ct Ned: Ah, so you recruited Trinlay. Good going.

Stock stuff natter: Stock talk is still Greek to me; but at least I recognized a few words in English here and there.<G> I really ought to pay a little more attention to the money I have put away here and there in accounts and deferred compensation.

Frequent Flyer: My sympathies to you on the loss of your grandmother. I don't think you can ever really be emotionally prepared for the death of a loved one. You can know that it's going to happen; but it's still a shock when it actually comes. At least you have your good memories of her and were able to spend time with her.

Comments: Excuse the leaky memory, but we did meet at DSC, yes? I remember you at the Robes' room party; I hope that wasn't a hallucination! It was quite an experience, getting to see all those names in the flesh. (A good experience, I hasten to add.)

Ct Oblio re cell phones: Our (now ex-) head librarian got so tired of people's cell phones going off in the library that she put a sign up on the door asking people to turn off their phones. I'm not sure it really helped; because at least one goes off each day. The most annoying part for me is those irritating "musical" rings. Then of course, there are those whose phones ring while they're in the stacks; then they pull them out and start yakking away. Even at Jazz Fest---I was listening to the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band while the people in front of me talked to someone on their phone, and held it up so the person on the other end could hear the band!

Ct Guilty Pleasures: Did I miss a mention of your book before? Fiction?
Non-fiction?

Twydrasil and Treehouse Gazette: And another SFPAn I met at DSC! It was nice to have met you and had a chance to chat with you. That was another good aspect of that con; that it was small enough to see people. WorldCons are so big; it can be hard to find people; but at DSC, you could meet other fans just sitting around the con suite and outside the meeting rooms.

Ouch, you had a realm of bad news this time around! I hope things are going along a little better by now. My computer is almost four years now; and could be considered underpowered, I suppose. However, it works well enough for my purposes; so I don't plan to change anytime soon. I've debated getting a cell phone in the past. I don't really want one, but it would be nice to have one along with me in the car on long trips just in case my car decides to break down in the middle of nowhere.

Peter, Pan & Merry: Ct to Gary Brown re Stars and Bars: The Confederate flag that is or was part of many states flag was the Confederate Battle Flag, not the CSA national flag. The changes to the flags came at different times. Mississippi's was added in the 1880's, I believe---supposedly that's why it didn't get voted out in the recent election; it had been around long enough for it to be traditional. Other states added those Confederate elements in the 20th century, at least one in the 50's. That's off the top of my head, so it may not be totally accurate.

Someone else with staff shortages! Although I don't have to worry about scheduling people; I just have to cope with trying to do a lot more with fewer people around.

Aristotle Meets Gernsback: Sorry to hear of the death of your kitty, Holly. "She was happy with us, and I think we gave her a good life." She was lucky to have you, and I know you'll miss her. When you are owned by a cat, especially for that long, she becomes a part of your life, as more than just a pet.

On the third-grader whose science fair project was banned---I remember reading about that. That little girl is going to learn a lot more than she originally thought. It's a shame the teacher won't be able to use her project as a good demonstration of how people think and don't think. Nine years old is not too young for those kids to start thinking seriously about racism and pre-conceived notions. The situation brings to mind a "Peanuts" cartoon that I clipped while I was in high school. One of the characters is writing a report on "Our School" in which she writes: "Going to our school is an education in itself, which is not to be confused with actually getting an education." She re-reads it, then wads the paper up and throws it away, saying, "I don't need that kind of trouble!" That cartoon cheered me up through some of my high school's insanities.

Ct me: What was I doing with a British actor in ancient Egypt? I could say, "Not nearly as much as I would have liked!" That would be like the beginning of an even better story than the boring reality. Here's the real story: Back in the early 90's, I went to MidSouthCon in Memphis (Tennessee, that is) with a group of friends. When we got there, we discovered the Media GoH was Mark Ryan, who played Nasir in the British series "Robin of Sherwood." I liked the series and had a pash for the character, so I was happy to see he would be there. At one point during the weekend, Ryan held a question and answer session. He made it mandatory for each person to ask something while "threatening" us all with a Super Soaker water gun. (He was obviously having a lot of fun.) After he answered each question, he would lob a souvenir of Memphis or something else to the person. It looked as if he had made a sweep of the stuff stores hang by the check-out counters---one person got a disposable flashlight in the shape of a fish. I asked my question; something or other to do with if he had kept up with the sword fighting he learned for the series; he answered that he had, somewhat; and tossed me a propeller

beanie with "Graceland" in embroidery on it. He admitted to being an Elvis fan, though I'm not sure if he went to Graceland itself, or he just got it somewhere else. I got it autographed later on as we tried to explain the fannishness of propeller beanies. Didn't really succeed in the explanation, but he was bemused that I thought a propeller beanie was a neat thing. I still have it, too; sitting there on top of my dresser.

Marching Through Oneshot: I'll be a nit-picker here; and note that the four-leaf clovers on the front are not shamrocks---shamrocks have three lobes! I'll forgive you all, however, because of including that gorgeous panorama shot of the mountain-top view.

Planet of the APAs: Hello, Trinlay! Welcome to the group! I'm still newish here, myself---it's been just over a year since I joined; but I've thoroughly enjoyed my time here. It's still a kick to know that every two months I'll be getting a nice fat envelope full of good reading.

Ct Spiritus Mundi: Your SO dumped you, then e-mailed that he was bringing home another woman? Well, put him down for "jerk of the year" award.

Dewachen: Fascinating trip report. Tibet is yet another of those spots I'm not likely to get to anytime soon; so I like reading about other people's experiences there.

Trivial Pursuits: Loved your account of looking for other fans at your tech conference because it's in the Chicago WorldCon hotel! As long as you don't ask at registration where the con suite is, the secret of your fannish life is safe.

Ct Rich ct Toni: If you like the Kage Baker novels about the Company, be sure to read the next two---*Mendoza in Hollywood* and *The Graveyard Game*. Be forewarned, however; Baker is writing a series and the reader is left hanging more and more at the end of each book. As I was reading *The Graveyard Game*, it was getting closer and closer to the end and I realized with some frustration that the questions I was dying to have answered weren't going to be gotten to in this book. I hope we learn a little more in the next, but she's planning to do seven, I believe; and I would hate to be strung along for that long with no answers. My position is that she had better tell us what's going on by the end of the series! Or I shall be severely miffed.

Ct Randy ct Cleary about your "to be read shelf" being the library. I know the feeling. And when you *work* in a library....Our branch doesn't get copies of all the books the library system carries, but there are still enough intriguing titles coming in or passing through that I check out lots more books than I have time to read.

Snow and Shmoozing: Two cons on successive weekends! Wow, I don't think I could have survived that. It would have been a little too much fannishness for me. I would have enjoyed hearing your speech at Concave---sounded like a good topic, especially for a Fan GoH. Matter of fact, it sounds like the whole con was a good one. Sounds like you had fun, too.

Tennessee Trash: Again, the mantra of: nice to have met you at DSC. When I first joined SFPA, it was a problem to try to keep track of all those unfamiliar names. Meeting people has helped a lot.

That was a nicely written article about ConCave. From your description of the con, the move was definitely a Good Thing, Comparing running a convention to performance art is a good analogy; one I've not heard before. Maybe it's also an interactive performance, since the "audience" also participates and can help insure its success or failure. Perhaps your hotel's blasé attitude toward fannish behavior came from their experience with actors staying there. When the night clerk mentioned "dancing naked in front of the fireplace", she may have been describing a past occurrence, not a possibility!

Steve vs The Printer: And the winner was...?

Guilty Pleasures: Alas, I still have not read *Pirate's Price*. I have been trying, though. The first time I tried to get it, I got some message about my credit card that I didn't understand and thought it was being sent. I waited several days without hearing anything and finally decided I'd have to try again. I tried again a couple of days ago, and this time I think I'll actually get it. Once I finish writing this, I'll have time to read it.

George Wells's Only an Idiot: This may be sounded repetitious, but it was nice to meet you at DSC. At least I think we met. I know you were there, though I can't recall if we were formally introduced.

I enjoyed reading the Buffy natter, even though I don't keep up with the show. I saw it a time or three when WGN was running it, but not since they took it off. My cable company doesn't carry the local channel that does run it; but they may start carrying it in June. I hadn't been terribly impressed by Buffy when I saw it before, but with all the talk about it and with all the people who do like it; I really should give it another chance.

Avatar Press: Ah, another person I didn't quite meet at DSC. We were at the one-shot at the same time and at the Robes' party; but we didn't really talk.

Regarding your house hunting: houses must go for more around there than they do here. You could get a very nice house in the Baton Rouge area for well under \$150,000. Of course it depends on the area and just how big you want those three bedrooms to be. You could also get a very nice house for \$300,00-400,00. I've been a homeowner for about 2 1/2 years now, and there are advantages. One is that it makes you feel like a real grown-up person. The disadvantages show up when you have to have the roof replaced (as I had to do last summer). Or the air-conditioning goes out. Which mine did, but luckily was easily fixed.

Home With the Armadillo: Oh, nice quilt! Quilting is one of those crafts I admire, but know I could never do. I used to get so frustrated trying to sew that I'm afraid quilting would send me over the edge! One of these years, though, I really ought to give it a try.

I'll repeat my sympathies for the death of Holly. One of my cats is getting on up in years, and I hate to think about losing her. She's one of the more loving ones; the one who's most apt to sleep on my bed with me.

I'm trying out the Simonson Lark series. It's too soon to tell how I'll like it; but I'm always glad to get mystery writer recommendations. I read one of Simonson's Regencies. Not bad; I actually liked the heroine instead of wanting to shake her for being so coy as I do in some Regencies.

Confessions of a Consistent Liar: Ct to Randy Cleary ct you: I never knew Shel Silverstein wrote *A Boy Named Sue*". I didn't realize until after his death, when the obituaries came out that he had written so much more than children's verses.

Passages: Great cover! Haydon and Samantha are adorable and your other little girl is as cute as can be. (Sorry, but I don't remember her name at the moment.) At first glance, I thought she looked like my (now adult) niece; but I think it's mostly the hair and eyes. Mom looks happy, but a little apprehensive---maybe she's thinking about the sort of "fun" that two will be able to have together! Good luck with them, and I wish you much energy in the years to come.

You mention your "warmblood" mare--what's that? I don't know much about horses other than admiring their looks.

Ct Liz re *The O'Reilly Factor* : I haven't read it myself, but it's been a popular one with our library patrons and has a long waiting list. I'll have to take a quick look at it next time it comes through. You say he promotes common sense; which is a good thing; however, I have heard people spout any old nonsense they liked and claimed it was "common sense" just because they believed it was so. Maybe we need to re-name it. Or maybe we should take back the meaning by using it correctly.

Oblio: Thanks for the continuing story of the infamous ballots. This is one election that will go into the history books. We'll never know what the actual count should have been since we'll never be able to definitely determine what the voters intended. Has there been any more work toward getting rid of those punch card ballots or at least abolishing the butterfly ballot? The state Republicans may be content with the status quo; but improperly punched cards could win up costing them an election, too.

Getting your name into a comic as a villain is fame of a sort, I suppose. Of course, if you're going to be a villain; that "Gary Brown" was the best type to be---a nasty one, with no redeeming qualities whatsoever. That way, the reader doesn't spend time feeling sorry for him when he gets his just desserts.

Ev'rybody's Got Something to Hide: or should that be *Me and My Monkey*? One title in the Table of Contents, one on the cover. Alas, the "hidden" part of my copy referred to some of the words---the margins were a little tight on the second and third folded sheets and a word or two was lost in the stapled area. I managed to read around them, however.

Ct Dengrove on the oldest joke: Okay, I'll bite. Why *does* a member of the municipal squadron of anti-conflagrationists wear red garters?

I liked the mention of how Merle Travis' song "Dark as the Dungeon" became listed as "traditional" in only three years after publication. That's almost fannish!

The Sphere: Good luck on impending grandfatherhood. Rachel sounds like she's taking care of herself and baby; perhaps it will continue. I wish her well.

I've been taking a look at Toonopedia; neat stuff! I'm not reading them in any order; I'll pick out one I'm familiar with, then I'll read one I've never heard of. I hadn't known there was a British "Dennis the Menace" until I read it on your site. It's a shame you got such a cool reception from the local SF fan crowd. I suppose I've been lucky with the fans I've known. A few of them had very narrow interests, but most were interested in just about everything.

"Yngvi is a Louse" and Other Graffitos: On the subject of "YNGVI" looking more like a genzine than perzine: I hadn't thought much about it other than your zine, your choice how to do it. I like perzines, but I'd hate to see you go all the way perzine if that meant we'd lose Charlotte's reviews.

And speaking of Charlotte, I see she doesn't like high-tech glitzy and loud shows any better than I do. We get the occasional Broadway traveling company through Baton Rouge, but it's usually one of the overblown extravaganzas. I don't exactly keep up with the New York theater scene, but I heard that the musical version of the movie "The Producers" has been a huge hit; and it's not much on special effects.

Ct Liz Copeland on voting difficulties. I've never had to wait long to vote; I don't think my precinct is that small, but the voting hours are long---6 a.m. to 8 p.m. There have been calls for the hours to be shorter since a 14 hour day is hard on the poll workers. I believe they have to stay the whole time---they can't work just a few hours.

And in Closing

For once, I'm not racing against a deadline. And having said that, I may have invoked the SFPA curse that Liz mentioned last time. I've already had mini disasters occur while I was trying to finish up or send off my zine other times. There was the time my printer cartridge ran out of ink while I was part way through printing late at night. I wasn't going to Wal-Mart that late even though it's not far and open 24 hours. When I went early the next morning, it took what seemed like forever to get the cartridge. It had to be paid for in the electronics department, but there was no one working in that department that early. Eventually a clerk decided she would take it with her to the Service Desk so I could pay for it there. From that, I learned to buy a cartridge before I start to print. Then there was the time I had it all ready to mail on my lunch hour. Except that when I tried to get to the post office, my car refused to start. Dead battery. On the day before Thanksgiving. I don't really want to know what the next obstacle will be!

This issue was a long one for me; but the next may be somewhat shorter. I'll be going to Toronto in July, getting back about the time I would need to mail my zine, so I'll have less time to work on it. My intentions are to start on mailing comments as soon as I receive this mailing so I'll have those done early on. You notice I said intentions. We shall see what we shall see. See you next time.