

THE GEIS LETTER -----63

The Future Is Never What It's Supposed To Be!

MAY 1999

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Freedom of the press:
Whoever owns the press owns the freedom.

---Arthur Lane Terego

Freedom of speech:
Everyone can speak; only the wealthy can make themselves heard.

---Arthur Lane Terego



News Diary

4-30-99 New York Times reports today that more B-52s are on the way to bomb Yugoslavia, this time with 'gravity' bombs---the old fashioned stupid kind---in carpet-bombing runs from verry high up, with full knowledge that this kind of bombing a la WW2, will result in high civilian casualties. This announcement is supposed to scare Milosevic and the Serbs into surrendering, I suppose.

I'd venture a guess that Clinton, in NATO disguise, has about one more month to 'force' a 'deal' with Milosevic before Congress is itself forced to act in some way to pull the plug on this ugly bathtub full of blunders and horrendously bad policy.

The conspiracy nut in me is suspicious that some contrived or faked Serb crimes or attacks on Americans will (like the Tonkin Gulf 'attack' at the start of the Vietnam War) force Congress to be blindly patriotic and approve an all-out ground war.

Or perhaps the catastrophic loss of two or three Apache attack helicopters will so infuriate and humiliate our arrogant, jingoistic citizenry that they'll go mad with rage and insist on sacrificing thousands of American soldiers to the great god Hubris.

And I am also still suspicious that this illegal war will be carried on without the cover of NATO, as one or more NATO nations vetoes further action.

5-3-99 I keep thinking, why would Milosovic make a deal to end the bombing at the cost of letting all those 'Ethnic Albanian' muslims back into Kosovo after having gone to all the trouble of expelling them and turning them all into blood enemies? Now he's also branded a war criminal and due for eventual indictment by the U.N. He'll win if he can get the bombing stopped and if he can stall until a NATO land offensive is impossible to mount this summer.

5-4-99 Alexis Gilliland just wrote: 'For myself, I think that sending in NATO ground troops to see the Kosovars safely home would be preferable to having a million or two refugees on welfare forever.'

That's an aspect of the quagmire

Clinton has gotten us into that is not yet being flourished on the media: The prospect of at least a million refugees in deteriorating tent cities all summer, all fall, all winter, all next spring...

But of course the refugees cannot survive in tents in the Balkan winter, and so soon the NATO allies will have to plan for contingency building of huge numbers of apartment buildings, along with power plants, water systems, sewer plants... Probably other buildings for recreation, assemblies... They'd better start NOW to get this reality in place, or face major political consequences.

The costs would mount into the billions, and the likely epidemics, riots and uprisings if these facilities are not provided would inevitably be on our heads.

The refugees are a weapon, and Milosevic has and is using it to pressure NATO to stop the war on his terms. Clinton can desperately make rubble of most of Yugoslavia, but the refugees will still be a gigantic atomic population bomb working to critical mass which cannot long be ignored.

On the other hand, a land war and consequent fuck-ups, significant American casualties, equipment losses and heavy-duty fault-finding would be even worse for Clinton and his party... during the primaries next year.

I doubt that there is a capacity to build for the refugees' winter and at the same time prepare the bases and infrastructure for a land army attack on Kosovo and Yugoslavia from Albania and Macedonia and/or Hungary.

What profit NATO and Clinton if, say, they invade from Hungary and occupy Belgrade? There will still be a 40,000 or more man Serbian army dug into Kosovo. And still a million refugees in Albania and Macedonia.

So, indeed, look for a negotiated end to the bombing this summer and a 'peace' Milosevic can easily live with. No land war. Milosevic not to be indicted. And we'll probably end up paying to rebuild all the buildings and bridges we've blown up, and we'll pay to bribe the Kosovars to return to their ruined villages, and pay to sustain them while they rebuild, and pay big time to keep their Liberation Army in the closet...

Humiliating. But cheaper than the alternatives.

And in a few years Milosevic (or the next President of Yugoslavia) can begin to pressure the Kosovars out again as their Kosovo Liberation Army emerges and begins guerrilla civil war again...

And that's the best scenario.

Humiliating, but with the media's help, we'll survive, ego and hubris intact.

5-5-99 Ian Goddard has been pursuing the Columbine Killers story and now on the internet presents news from the autopsy of the Harris boy:

<Ian@Goddard.net>
Subject: WorldNetDaily: DOPING OUR KIDS

Harris had 'therapeutic levels' of the medical drug Luvox in his blood when he went on the shooting rampage and then killed himself.

According to reputable medical sources, Luvox is an anti-depressant drug which can cause mania, delusions, grandiosity, and aggressive behavior...in a small percentage of its users.

Now, as this news percolates through the media and society, I suppose the gun debate will shift to the kids-and-drugs problem...

But Harris (and the other kid?) had brain malfunctions, chemical imbalances, hormone problems (caused by flawed or damaged genes?...a not-quite-right womb?)...which caused the need for compensatory or controlling medical drugs with some heavy side-effects.

The medical 'cure' may have been worse than the disease. If the boys were both taking med drugs for over a year.

But the tiny number of dangerous kids with seriously scrambled brains/-minds is not a specific problem the Libs want to address. It's easier and more profitable for them in power-money terms to agitate for more federal gun control laws, more federal parenting control laws, and more federal 'monitoring' of all kids of every age...so that all the unconventional, contrary, rebellious and creative kids (along with the dangerously flawed-brain kids, and all the millions of maladjusted kids already on Ritalin...) can be spotted early on and drugged by the federal government into hopefully safe, conforming, vegetable status, all at huge, growing taxpayer expense and loss of freedoms ...for our own good, understand!

Are you into stocks? Buy the big drug corporations; they are a growth industry.

5-11-99 The B-2 smart-bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade is suspicious. Plainly the Chinese don't believe it was an accident or mistake caused by the use of an outdated 1992 CIA map.

The old map showed a vacant lot where later the embassy was built. So the target-pickers targeted a vacant lot without an address... No, that can't be right.

Since the three satellite-guided bombs released by the B-2 bomber had to be guided by look-down images of the city, and not by street addresses, how did the satellite-bomb 'pilots' know to hit that building?

Ah, the CIA got the street name wrong and the street number wrong and used 'educated guessing' to arrive at that location? An empty lot on their map? And the satellite-guided-bomb pilots knew they had to hit that location with three powerful bombs when their CIA map showed a vacant lot but their Look-Down photos showed a building?

Duh... Somehow I don't think we're being told the whole truth here, Toto.

No wonder the Chinese govt. is angry and is allowing/arranging the student protesters to rock, trash & burn our embassy and consulates in China.

5-12-99 I haven't done any economy comments lately, so here are a few---

■ I think it's great that the IMF came through to give Russia a few more \$billions so that the Russians can pay some of the debts they owe to the big US and European banks. The IMF, of course, whose reason for existence is to save big banks' bad debts under the guise of saving foreign economies, gets its money from its member governments, who get their money from their taxpayers. Thus we common people bail out Citibank and Chase-Manhattan and BankAmerica from the consequences of their stupidly bad loans, and only one in a thousand Americans know it. Not that there's anything they can or want to do about it.

■ There may be an interesting Catch-22 in the works---as U.S. and Euro money flows back to Asia in expectation of getting in on the ground floor of the expected Recovery there...instead of flowing into or staying in the U.S. and Euro bond markets and stock markets.

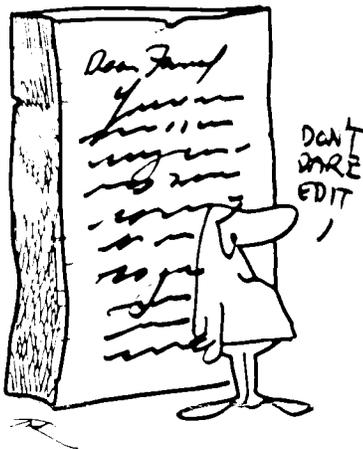
Thus a lack of liquidity here drives up our interest rates which in turn double-causes our stock markets to tumble which in turn causes large losses and less optimism, and less buying of foreign goods which causes another dip in Asian (and Euro) economies which causes losses there....the snake eats its tail...and the debt collapse sets in, big time.

A recession causes tax receipts to decline, causing deficits which cause cutbacks in govt. services...causing God-know-what in the elections next year.

Wow. The future is never what it's supposed to be!

■■■

BOOKS RECEIVED



Some reviewed, others listed and described.

New Releases

THE TERRORISTS OF IRUSTAN

By Louise Marley

ACE Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$13.95, 323p, Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00619-1

On the planet Irustan--- Zahra Ibsada is a talented medicant, and sees much of the joy in the lives of the women she heals---and much of the pain. She sees a wife brutally beaten. A prostitute suffering at the hands of her employers. And her best friend Kalen, a mother who is struggling to save her daughter from a cruel betrothal. Kalen begs Zahra for help, and although it goes against her medicant vows, Zaha reluctantly agrees. But this silent act of terrorism will have far-reaching consequences--for herself, and for all the women of her planet...

WRAPT IN CRYSTAL

By Sharon Shinn

ACE Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$13.95, 324p, Trade paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00616-7.

On a planet of barren beauty near the edge of the civilized galaxy, two religions are practiced. Both sects worship the same goddess---the Triumpantes in joy and splendor, the Fideles in solemnity and selflessness. ... The two sects are now bound together in death...

A serial killer is stalking the priestesses, killing first a Triumpante, then a Fidele, in turn. Six women are now dead, and the planetary authorities are at a loss. Enter Interfed Agent Cowan Drake. A cunning professional, he must immerse himself in an unfamiliar world of stark spirituality to catch a killer...

THE ALLELUIA FILES

By Sharon Shinn

ACE Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$6.99, 436p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00620-5.

It has been one hundred years since the Archangel Alleluia and the mortal Caleb discovered the truth about the god of Samaria.

Legend says they left a record of that truth, though no document has ever been found. In time, an underground cult arose, seeking to find again what Alleluia found. But the reigning Archangel Bael called down the wrath of Jovah upon the cult, and hundreds died in a hail of thunderbolts. Yet some survived.

Among them is Tamar, child of cultists, raised in captivity among the angels. Tamar believes that the Alleluia Files exist. She is determined to find them ... In her search she encounters the angel Jared, one who questions the wisdom of Bael...

THE BLACK SWAN

By Mercedes Lackey

DAW Fantasy Novel, 1999, \$24.95, 376p, Hardcover, ISBN: 0-88677-833-6.

After his wife's untimely death, a powerful sorcerer dedicates his life to seeking revenge against all womankind. As he scours the land to capture women, he selects his prey and turns them all into swans that only regain their human forms by the transitory light of the moon. Only Odette, noblest of the enchanted flock, has the courage to confront her captor. Can she gain the allies she needs to free herself and the other swan-maidens from their magical slavery?

THE FEAR OF GOD

By B.A. Chepaitis

ACE Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$5.99, 274p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00622-1.

On Planetoid Three, Jaguar Adams enters the minds of criminals. She lives in the shadows of their fears...and chases them into the light.

The followers of the Revelation Sect are preparing for the Second Coming. Stockpiles of weapons were found when federal agents stormed the home of their fanatical leader, Sardis Malocco. Now Jaguar must resort to using a virtual reality environment of Heaven to get to the root of Sardis's fear of God---before Revelation's zealots unleash their own apocalypse upon the world...

THE QUARTERED SEA

By Tanya Huff

DAW Fantasy Novel, 1999, \$6.99, 406p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-839-5.

No one could deny that the young bard Benedikt was the most powerful Singer of water in the entire kingdom of Shkoder. But water was the only Quarter he could sing. And without the ability to sing Air, he was isolated from his fellow bards in a way few among them could even begin to understand.

So when Queen Jelena asked for a bard to volunteer for a dangerous mission---to take ship aboard the newly built *Starfarer* and search beyond the known lands on a quest to find the homeland of the legendary Dark Sailor, Benedikt immediately volunteered...

CRYSTAL SAGE

By Kara Dalkey

ROC Fantasy Novel, 1999, \$5.99, 266p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45640-8.

Joan Dark, owner of a housecleaning company, is eminently practical, having long ago given up believing in the supernatural. That is, until now. Her client, Gillian, a musicologist working on her master's thesis, has been turned into a guitar after her research into an ethereal Celtic ballad conjured up an ancient --- and seductive --- power. Now Gillian has to pay for her interference. And Joan has no choice but to help Gillian.

JERLAYNE

By Lynn Abbey

DAW Fantasy Novel, 1999, \$6.99, 519p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-809-3.

When Elmeene was young, a scourge devastated the realm of Faerie. Mortals had learned to work iron, and the immortal elves who ventured through the Veil to forage in the world of men, had brought the toxic metal home, unaware of the danger. Iron's poison had swept through Faerie, leaving no elfin home untouched by blooddeath, threatening to annihilate this land of undying people.

Elmeene had risked her life to discover a cure for blooddeath, and had saved her world.

Now, two thousand years later, Faerie is apparently thriving again, but Elmeene's youngest daughter, Jerlayne, feels that all is not well with her mother or in the land. Jerlayne has failed to have children of any kind---elf, dwarf, gnome, or even a siren. She sets out on a quest for answers---a quest through the Veil which will uncover mysteries dating back to the founding of Faerie itself.

THE LAST LEGION

By Chris Bunch

ROC Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$6.99, 344p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45686-6.

In a turbulent age of the human Confederation empire, a forgotten branch of the Army patrols the farthest reaches of civilization. And as the volatile Confederation begins to implode, they are humanity's only hope for the future.

Fast-paced, tensioned, dangerous, realistic, violent... This is a man's novel!

AGAINST THE TIDE OF YEARS

By S.M. Stirling

ROC Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$6.99, 454p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45743-9.

In the years since the Event, the Republic of Nantucket has done its best to recreate the better ideas of the modern age. But the evils of its time resurface in the person of William Walker, renegade Coast Guard officer, who is busy building an empire for himself based on conquest by technology.

When Walker reaches Greece and recruits several of their greater kingly to his cause, the people of Nantucket have no choice. If they are to save the primitive world from being plunged into bloodshed on a twentieth-century scale, they must defeat Walker at his own game: war.

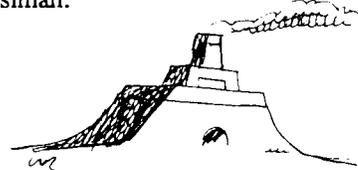
A history buff will love this, and others will get an education in passing as they become immersed in this sweeping, alternate timeline war novel

PROM NIGHT

Edited By Nancy Springer

DAW Fantasy Anthology, 1999, \$6.99, 309p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-840-9.

Twenty-two new stories about the weird & ghastly sides of prom nights, from such as Dave Smeds, Fred Sabers-hagen, A.R. Morlan, Lawrence Schimmel, Lawrence Watt-Evans, and Billie Sue Mosiman.



THREADS OF AMBITION Book One of The Capellan Solution. Battletech novel. ROC Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$5.99, 276p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45744-7.

This is about the 44th Battletech novel, a series written by about 13 novelists.

I'm not 'into' this kind of series, but it appears to be about soldiers inside 65-ton humanoid-shaped battle tanks on legs, and the battles between them individually and in groups, along with all the intrigue and power-plays involved in wars and pre-wars in the far future of mankind among the stars.

Even assuming these books to be aimed primarily at boys (of any age), I found this one to be overwritten.

TIMBERJAK

By Don DeBrandt

ACE Science Fiction Novel, 1999, \$5.99, 370p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00626-4.

In the far reaches of civilized space, an immense blue forest called the Indigo Wild is being logged for its extraordinary wood and the strange force-field it emits.

In charge of this lumber enterprise is Paul Banyan, whose tree-chopping feats some far will leave the planet bare. Now a deranged scientist who calls himself Johnny Rainforest is leading a ferocious army from this deep blue wild to defend his beloved trees....

But the central characters are Hone, a deprogrammed, freelance cyborg assassin, and two entities in his brain: Melody, an artificial intelligence, and Mike, a human mind in cyberspace.

The novel is subtitled "A new kind of cyber-myth". And it is action-danger from start to finish.

THE HOUSE OF BAIRN [Magelord #3]

By Thomas K. Martin

ACE Fantasy Novel, 1999, \$5.99, 292p, Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00623-X.

While those with the power flee King Gavin's wrath, Bjorn, a simple hunter, has discovered the same ability within himself. Now he is what he once feared most—a MageLord.

Hunted by friends and foes alike, Bjorn calls upon his magic to save him. He awakens --- a thousand years in the past, a time when MageLords ruled...

Star Wars Dark Forces: REBEL AGENT

By William C. Dietz & Ezra Tucker

Boulevard Trade Paperback, 1999, \$14.95, 128p, Illustrated, ISBN: 0-425-16862-x.

Based on the #1 bestselling *Star Wars: Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight* interactive games, *Rebel Agent* is part two of a trilogy.

In *Soldier for the Empire*, Rebel agent Kyle Katarn swore revenge against the Empire for the death of his father. He began his quest by stealing the secret plans to a new battle station called the Death Star. But Kyle's quest is just beginning...

After 8188 threatens Kyle in a Nar Shaddaa bar, Kyle tracks down the treacherous droid and secures a mysterious disk that may give him more information on his father's death.

But the disk gives Kyle more than he bargains for: the location of a map to the Valley of the Jedi, a place Kyle's father had stumbled

upon and kept secret. Now it's a race between Kyle and agents of the Empire to see who can get to the map—and the valley—first.

There are 25 full color, full-page paintings, all excellent, by Tucker.

The writing by Dietz is swift and clear and simple. Do I detect an occasional tongue-in cheek?

A CHILL IN THE BLOOD

A novel from The Vampire Files

By P.N. Elrod

ACE Fantasy novel, 1999, \$5.99, 327p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00627-2.

When he was alive, Jack Fleming was a reporter with a nose for news. Now that he's dead, he's a private eye with a thirst for justice --- and blood. But being a vampire with morals is no midnight stroll on the streets of post-prohibition Chicago. In the city of sin, the gangs still rule—and they're on the brink of an all-out war. Neither crooks nor cops care how much blood, innocent or otherwise, flows during the fight. But Jack does.

THE DARK SLEEP

A novel from The Vampire Files

By P.N. Elrod

ACE Fantasy novel, 1999, \$21.95, 359p., Hardcover, ISBN: 0-441-00591-8.

Death hasn't ended vampire Jack Fleming's problems. His girlfriend Bobbi has caught the attention of a famous radio star, who promises to open doors for the lovely singer—including the one to his bedroom. Jack's current case---retrieving incriminating letters from the ex-lover of a rich, foolish young socialite---looks simple until bullets start flying. Now Jack's mortal partner is in the hospital. Who is behind the gun? The ex-lover? The radio star's goons? An old enemy?

P.N. Elrod loves to write dialog and loves to describe people and places and to track their shifting relationships...to the point of impatience and boredom in the reader.

Her lead character, Jack Fleming, seems merely inconvenienced by his vampirehood, and uses his ability to instantly dematerialize and solidify to gain entry and listen in and shock miscreants with great frequency. And he is also capable of bleeding nearly to death, and getting erections and feeling lust and love. More human than dead, I guess, though not casting a reflection in mirrors is a problem, as well as having to go the slaughterhouse to feed on cow blood. Jack doesn't feed on humans except little sips during the throes of passion...

I noticed a couple Britishisms in the early chapters of *The Dark Sleep* which lead me to think the author lives in England. Her recreation of 1930's Chicago is okay for place names and event, but the talk isn't patois true.

Altogether, not good writing, but for those readers with a lot of patience, it's okay.

TOM CLANCY'S NET FORCE:

The Ultimate Escape

Created By Tom Clancy and Steve Pieczenik

BERKLEY JAM BOOKS, 1999, \$4.99, 181p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-425-16939-1.

In the future, computers rule the world.

The NetForce was formed to protect us from any and all criminal activity on-line. But there is a group of teenage whizkids who sometimes know more about computers than their adult superiors. They are the Net Force Explorers. They go where no one else can go. And they fight crime like no one else in the world...

No author credit. This is a Young Adult TV Tie-in

The writing is professional but a bit clunky. Not that that matters.

GEN 13: NETHERWAR

By Christopher Golden and Jeff Mariotte
ACE Science Fiction, 1999, \$5.99, 230p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00621-3

Five teenagers were brought together by the covert operations organization 1/0 to become the United States government's next generation of super-powered operatives.

Unwilling to be 1/0's pawns, the teens escaped the organization's clutches with the help of renegade agent John Lynch, who soon became their mentor and friend.

Now, the young heroes must stop the operatives of 1/0 from gaining access to the demonic power of the Hellgate---and possibly from destroying the world as well!

Chapter-opening illustrations by comics artist John Cassaday. The action cover painting by Julie Bell features a melon-breasted redhead in a green skin-tight action outfit. Yum!

There's a Catholic-Bible-Hell component in this novel which is somewhat unusual and interesting.

FANTASTIC ALICE

Edited by Margaret Weis

ACE Fantasy Anthology, 1999, \$5.99, 287p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00634-5.

Seventeen stories about Alice and those people/creatures she encountered in *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*---but this time by weird writers such as Esther M. Friesner, Bruce Holland Rogers, Roger Zelazny, Lawrence Schimel, Janet Asimov, Gary A. Braunbeck, Tobin Larson, Peter Crowther, Jody Lynn Nye, Connie Hirsch, Janet Pack, Mickey Zucker Reichert, Lawrence Watt-Evans, Lisa Mason, Kevin T. Stein, Robin Wayne Bailey, and Jane M. Linkskold.



FADED STEEL HEAT

By **Glen Cook**

ROC Fantasy novel, 1999, \$6.99, 356p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45479-0.

TunFaire is a magical alternate reality inhabited by humans and creatures and some others in which Garrett (Glen Cook's wise guy private eye) operates.

Cook has been writing these Garrett adventures in TunFaire for a looong time, and he's good at it; they move!, they're involving, and they always speak to the human condition, even if it seems weird and perverse at first glance.

THE CHILDREN OF WRATH

By **Mickey Zucker REICHERT**

DAW Fantasy Novel, 1999, \$6.99, 623p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-860-3.

Third and final volume of *The Renshai Chronicles*.

One day I must devote a week to Reichert, because sampling this one whets my appetite.

SWORD AND SORCERES XVI

Edited by **Marion Zimmer Bradley**

DAW Fantasy Anthology, 1999, \$6.99, 306p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-88677-843-3.

26 original stories about woman who take up challenges so often considered the sole province of men.

FREEDOM'S CHALLENGE

By **Anne McCaffrey**

ACE Science Fiction, 1999, \$6.99, 303p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-441-00625-6.

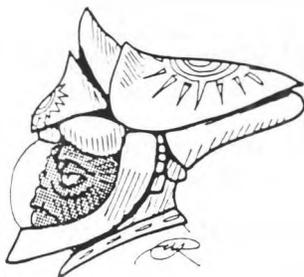
In *Freedom's Landing*, a brutal invasion enslaved thousands of humans --- and forced them to colonize a new planet. In *Freedom's Choice*, human Chris Bjornsen and her comrades found new hope for a rebellion. Now the true battle is approaching. Confronting their oppressors, Kris and her Catteni lover Zainal will face danger and pain as they reach for the ultimate prize--- a new liberty for their people....

SHADOWRUN - THE FOREVER DRUG

By **Lisa Smedman**

ROC Fantasy novel, 1999, \$5.99, 271p., Mass market paperback, ISBN: 0-451-45747-1.

There's a new "drug" on the streets, promising a phenomenal---and deadly---high. But this time the dealers aren't selling a substance. They're working with a creature called a "corpse light"---a creature of pure magic that gives the customer a euphoric rush...as it drains the poor sap's life away.



JUDGEMENT DAY FOR THE SHROUD OF TURIN

By **Walter McCrone**

PROMETHEUS BOOKS Nonfiction, 1999, \$34.95, 365p., Hardcover, ISBN: 1-53792-679-5.

The core of the book is contained in one paragraph on page 143:

'The "Shroud" was painted (probably in 1355) with an iron earth pigment, red ochre, and enhanced at the same time in the blood-image areas with a medieval pigment (mercuric sulfide) in a form available only since the eighth century. Both paints, commonly used in medieval times, had a collagen binder; though much more dilute than otherwise similar waterbase paints. This mediuum dried on the linen has yellowed with age and, as such, stains the fibers in body- and blood-image areas. There are no other colored substances other than red ochre, vermilion, yellowed fibers or a very few extraneous colored dust particles in any image area.'

Three independant laboratories in 1988 did repeated carbon dating tests on the linen of the Shroud and all reached the same date period: approximately 1325 A.D., which confirmed Walter McCrone's 1980 estimate based on his knowledge as an expert microanalyst specializing in art forgeries and authentication.

McCone details the history of the "Shroud" and his exhaustive tests and examinations of fibers and particles, and includes all the correspondence involved between himself and the Turin Commission on the Holy Shroud, of which he was a member...but not for long.

In the end, the religious True Believers now have retreated to supernatural explanations to explain the image on the "Shroud" and have attempted to consign McCone and his 'painting' findings to the Memory Hole.

This is an excellent, convincing book for any objective reader.

ELECTRONIC CIRCUITS AND SECRETS OF AN OLD-FASHIONED SPY

By **Sheldon Charrett**

PALADIN PRESS, 1999, \$20.00 (1-303-443-7250 for ordering), 117p., Large trade paperback, ISBN: 1-58160-027-5.

All about listening and phone tapping bugs---how to adapt easy-to-buy equipment, how to install... Great technical stuff for a writer of spy novels and related fiction. This book would be a good addition to a writer's reference library.



Noted:

DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES #53

Edited and published by **David C.**

Kopaska-Merkel

1300 Kicker Rd., Tuscaloosa AL 35404. \$12/6, 24p., Halfpage format, ISSN: 0897-0238.

To repeat my criticism of modern, 'free verse' poetry: chopped up flowery prose which lazily dodges the discipline of rhyme and meter.

D&N is mostly such poetry, but David also on occasion uses short-short fiction pieces, and this issue is host to two remarkable items: "*New York Ten Years After the Resurrection*" by William John Watkins, a vivid, ghastly sketch of an awakened city of the undead --- and "*Sarah's Crossing*" by Chapin Shaw Tucker, a well-told tale of ghostly demands satisfied.

PAPERBACK PARADE #52

The Magazine for Paperback Readers and Collectors

Edited and published by **Gary Lovisi**

Gryphon Publications, PO Box 280-209, Brooklyn, NY 11228-0209, \$8.00, 5/\$45.

As usual a goldmine of info on the grand old paperback publishing-writing-cover-painting milieu of the 1940's, 50's, 60's...and the current appreciation and collecting world. Lovisi produces a professional quality 104-page labor of love.

THE BURROUGHS BULLETIN #37 (New Series) Edited and published by

George T. McWhorter

Send \$28. (domestic) or \$35. (international) checks or M.O.'s payable to George T. McWhorter, The Burroughs Memorial Collection, University of Louisville Library, Univ. of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292. The Bulletin is quarterly. You will also receive monthly issues of *The Gridley Wave*, the Burroughs Bibliophiles' newsletter.

Slick, heavy-stock, color covers, 42-pages. This issue is devoted to examining Burroughs' novel, *The War Chief* (1927), his youthful experiences in that territory, and to the Apache indians he portrayed with respect and sympathy.

DREAMS OF DECADENCE #8

Vampire Poetry and Fiction

Edited by **Angela Kessler**

48p + covers, ISSN: 1097-2854.

WEIRD TALES #315

Edited by **Darrell Schweitzer** 68p.,

WEIRD TALES LIBRARY #1

Edited by **John Betancourt** 116p.

ABORIGINAL SCIENCE FICTION

Winter 1998

Edited by **Charles C. Ryan**

68p., ISSN: 0895-3198.

ABSOLUTE MAGNITUDE SF #10

Edited by **Warren Lapine**

68p. ISSN: 1070-6569.

The five magazines listed above are all published by DNA Publications, PO Box 910, Greenfield, MA 01302-0910. All are available for \$16. for 4 quarterly is-sues. Except *Weird Tales Library* which sells for \$7.50 retail, or \$9.00 by mail.

How good are they? From the above samples they are all of professional quality,

Pirate Writings is subtitled *Tales of Fantasy, Mystery + Science Fiction*. That's too broad a reach, I think, and dilutes it's readership. Two good stories in it, though: "Fax" by Paul Di Fillippo, and "The Death of a Respectable Man" by Chris Bunch.

Absolute Magnitude has a fine cover by John Holand, and another good story, "Backblast" by Chris Bunch. I get the impression that the magazine is trying to be like *Analog* or *Asimov's*. A questionable ambition, but what is the alternative? For me the outstanding piece in this 10th issue is "Primary Ignition," by Allen Steele, an article or column about professional writing and about the zine's monumental slush pile and how it is worked by 'the editorial board'. It's enough to discourage (rightly) 99% of all wannabe and amateur writers. But, alas, nothing can initially discourage them.

Dreams of Decadence - Vampire Poetry and Fiction, is certainly niche-worthy: I gather it is edited for mostly young women with an unconscious, unnamed yen... Great eye-grabbing cover by Julia Morgan-Scott.

Weird Tales shows the editorial skills and talents of Darrell Schweitzer, especially his knowledge and sureness of touch in his editorials, letter column commentaries and his book reviews. The art choices are very good, especially the cover by Jack Gaughan, which revives regret that he's long gone.

Weird Tales Library #1, edited by John Betancourt, is 112 pages plus wrap-around covers (a fine Steve Fabian fantasy seascape), and contains two full novels and a Betancourt short-short story. Worth the cover price of \$7.50 if you haven't read one of the novels previously. But my main problem is the small print; 10-point type is reader-resistant and counter-productive. The 'Library' is an experiment, and too ambitious. I'd suggest one novel per issue, well illustrated, with large type. That would make it, at say \$5.00, a better bargain than \$5.99 and \$6.99 paper-backs.

Aboriginal Science Fiction is another in the *Asimov's & Analog* format. Charles C. Ryan is a very good editor, but since the largest circulation

prozines are essentially just hanging on, why try to be like them? The format isn't really successful any more.



Which leads me again to my radical solution to the problems faced by text fiction, especially genre sf, fantasy and horror.

Give up traditional story-telling techniques and go for short, lean sentences, give up almost all interiors (thinking), and tell the story with dialog and action. Set the scene in passing and set character via dialog and action. In short, use script techniques in prose.

In this era of condensed stories in films, TV and in music videos (to point to extremes) brevity in writing is the soul of reading. Let the excruciatingly detailed atmosphere and brooding, thought-filled story be the exception. Readers today have so many image-experiences in their brains on file, that they will automatically fill in most scenes from shorthand descriptive clues given by a writer and will want to 'cut to the chase' -- danger, suspense, action -- asap.

That is, male readers will. But I mostly agree that most women readers still like the detailed preliminaries as much or better than the violence and danger and climactic ending. As in sex, women prefer the romance and the courtship, while the men have the groping, fucking and orgasm in mind.

But can professional writers suddenly change their natural style and their use of traditional writing techniques--- even if editors encourage it? I don't thank so. Only a few... But if those few had success...if teenagers began buying and reading certain magazines and books, alerted by word of mouth... A new New Wave... But the teenagers I'm speaking of are males, boys, young adults... Our lost audience.

There is a certain element of let's pretend and fantasy in this hopeful solution, to the increasing marginalization of printed fiction. Would the kids increase their fiction reading even if reading fiction were as easy as it is possible to make it? Isn't it even easier to watch a fast-paced movie or TV show?

We'd have to give the kids more content, more ideas, more mind-blowing

concepts---that they can't find in current films and TV.

I would also suggest a lot more R-rated stories...such as "Kill Me Hideously" by Ramsey Campbell in the latest *Weird Tales* (#315)... But that would probably drive away the girls and women...unless they were the central characters...

Will we have genre fiction ghettos? Science fiction for boys-men and fantasy for girls-women? Wait and watch.

Review



AND THEN I SAW....

THE MUMMY [1999 - PG-13]

Call it *Indiana Jones Meets the Mummy*. Or *Through Darkest Underground City of the Dead With Sword and Pistol*. Very good special effects make this an action-packed rootin', tootin' bang-bang fun-to-watch teenage boy confection. It has its tongue firmly in cheek, and there is never a doubt but the hero and heroine will survive any certain death situation.

THE X-FILES [1998 - R]

The alien-human secret elite conspiracy is laid bare, as FBI agents Mulder and Scully run around uncovering clues and fragments of proof and getting in serious trouble and almost admit they are in love.

I ask myself: whyinhell don't the aliens and/or the secret elite human conspirators simply kill-by-'accident' these two nuisances and be done with it?

The core of the alien's intent is to take back Earth and wipe out humans by means of a virus which uses human bodies as wombs for new aliens.

The human elite, realizing they have been duped, seek an antidote to the virus. Both aliens and humans seek to keep governments and the public in the dark.

This is a watchable movie, but there are no awesome special effects... Well, maybe at the near-end when the Antarctic 'base' is revealed as a huge buried alien mother ship which leaves Earth in a big hurry.

NOAH'S ARK [1999 - NBC 2-part mini-series]

Juvenile. With ho-hum special effects. The film was outrageously padded with Ark family celibacy and

infighting and invented post-downpour dangers to the drifting Ark from ship pirate survivors, and change-of-pace via a charming floating merchant (Charles Coburn in a bit part). The producers were seemingly intent on making this Bible story a historical joke.

The voice-of-God voice is so wimpy, and God's behavior is so childish and mercurial and peevish as to be a major dissing of God. How could a thinking adult worship and obey such a petty, ego-ridden Creator? Well, there were a few miracles, but even so...



FEEDBACK

BUZZ DIXON 5-1-99

"She writes like a man" used to be a compliment. Most people I know who can't stand the new versions of STAR TREK all point to the shows' apparently feminine sensibilities. I've tried reading some recent sci-fi and I've yet to find a book where I could wade through more than just the first chapter. All first chapter survivors were written by men. Most of the ones where I couldn't force myself further in than the first page were written by women. ALL of the ones that I couldn't shoulder through the first PARAGRAPH were written by females.

Mind you, this probably says more about me than the writers, regardless of their gender. As a writer myself, I tend to want to get past the fancy little tricks too many writers like to play with and get down to the meat and bones of a story. Many women (not just sci-fi writers/readers, either; my wife is like this) prefer the trip much more than the destination, if you know what I mean.'

Geis says: Yeah, man, life on Mars is much better than life on Venus. DNA will out.

Except--- I've lately come across some damned good pure story-telling by women, and some god-awful diffused and 'relationship' fiction by men, so...

GENE MIERZEJEWSKI 5-4-99

INTERNET:gmierz@concentric.net

'As the days passed, I figured I was out of the woods re: my comments on "chick SF." Either that or any possible complainers were too cheap to send their letter bombs via Priority Mail, so their explosions were sent via the ultra-slow parcel post or book rate. Then I got the *May Letter* today.

'Hoo-wee ... did I, in a previous life, kill the cows, poison the wells or burn the crops of Darrell Schweitzer? I've never had such a vicious ad hominem attack from anyone whom I have never met (unless at least one of the questions I raised in the previous sentence is answered in the affirmative.) I feel so ... so ... honored. My criticisms must have come close to home for him to lash out so strongly at a person he knows absolutely nothing about. (For the record: I have been VERY happily married for 22 years and am the EXTREMELY proud father of two wonderful, talented daughters.)

'I must thank Darrell (who probably got help from his brothers Darrell and Larry) for jogging my memory on women SF writers from my "formative" years. Kate Wilhelm was and is a kick-ass writer, and I loved Evelyn Smith's short stories in my youth. Another writer who springs to mind is Roselle George Brown, who did some really nice stuff in the '60s. As for Zenna Henderson ... the first "People" story was pretty cool, but the second made my teeth ache. Once to the well (of "The People") was enough, thank you.

'I guess Cele Goldsmith was a fine editor ... I didn't read *Amazing* or *Fantastic* in the '60s since an allowance of 25 cents a week buys only so much. By the time I was reading those mags, Ted White was in charge. But Judith Merrill was a negative influence on the field -- I much enjoyed her "Best of" anthologies in the late '50s and early '60s, but her love of the "new wave" poisoned science fiction a decade later. Her later collections were unreadable. I suspect her affinity for the obscure helped make sci-fi into a genre worthy of study at universities (which is another strike against her.)

'The bottom line is that "chick SF" is a helluva lot less important than what's happening in Kosovo, and ANYONE's impression of my take on chick SF is far less worthy than that. Sadly, sir, I present no ad hominem response to Mr. Not Albert Schweitzer. As they said in the war movies 55 year ago, "So sorry."'

Geis says: Sir, you are a man after my heart: a true believer in that sacred dictum, "Let's get science fiction out of the classroom and back in the gutter where it belongs!"

Isn't your put-down reference to brothers Darrell and Darrell and Larry (from *The Dick Newhart Show*) ad hominem?

And what does Kosovo have to do with all this? You can't minimize your sexist blasphemy so easily.

VINCE NOWELL 5-11-99

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I was a bit surprised that Darrell Schweitzer left out the names of two long-term, workhorse femme editors: Mary Gnaedinger, who directed *Famous Fantastic Mysteries / Fantastic Novels* for many years, and the venerable Dorothy McIlwraith of the lamented original *Weird Tales*.'

'Huzzahs! to Poul Anderson and his insight.'

MURRAY MOORE 5-9-99

INTERNET:mmoore@pathcom.com

'On April 28, Curt Phillips typed the following for distribution to the Memory Hole mailing list for fanzine fans: "For what it's worth, I just noticed that there are some actual fanzines being sold on eBay. Currently there's a copy of *The Alien Critic* being offered. The bid's up to \$5.50 and there were 4 hours left as I write this, if anyone's interested.

"But I'd have to say, I can't think of a less satisfying way to add to my fanzine collection than by making some non-fannish flea market dealer rich by selling zines back to our community. Rather distasteful, when you think about it.

"Besides, there aren't any issues of *Hyphen* being offered right now. I checked."'

Geis says: I published those few issues of *The Alien Critic* back in 19 and 75 or so, so this is sort of flattering. It is a revoltin' development, of course, since it signifies that sf fandom has 'lost' its fanzine virginity. The outsiders are having illicit congress with us. Rape!

First we lost science fiction, then 'fanzines' became generic, and now they want our old zines!

'What is the world coming to?!



PERSONAL

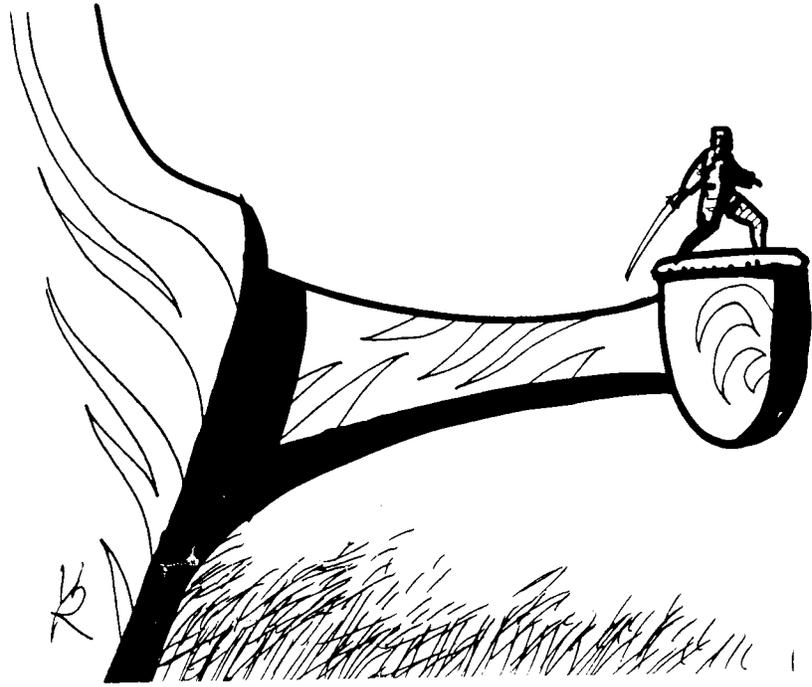
5-18-99 Paulette (my very significant other) fell on Saturday, May 15, and broke her right thigh bone just below the hip ball-in-socket.

She was operated on the next day and has a nice chromium steel ball attached to her thigh bone and is progressing nicely. She'll be in a Kaiser physical therapy facility for a few days after release from St. Vincent's Hospital.

Then she'll be home and I'll be busy helping her as much as possible.

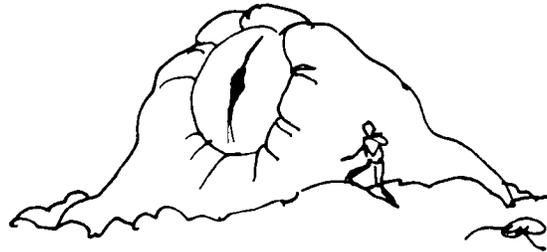
Which means that for a few months THE GEIS LETTER will probably be off its monthly or less-than-monthly schedule. But keep them books and mags and letters coming. I'll catch up.

I realize Geis-deprivation is a serious illness, but hang in there, gang! I'll be back soon to frequently provide the proper world view and reviews for you all. ■ ■ ■



ROTSLER →

The rest of this page is dedicated to the great Bill Rotsler. Enjoy.



THE ENTTRALLMENT
THIS FANZINE HAS
CAST OVER YOU IS
NOW DISPERSED.



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