

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome readers! This issue of the **West Wind** truly has been a labor of love for all involved; be sure to drop us a line or two and let us know what you think. There are so many, many wonderful fanzines out there so we have chosen to focus on fandom in the Pacific Northwest. And by fandom I mean the far-reaching community of writers, artists, gamers, costumers, media junkies, etc...fans in all their diverse glory.

This issue somehow became mostly about writing and writers with two interviews, a short story and several book reviews for your delectation. I am already gathering material for our Winter 2011 issue which will hopefully be coming out around the start of the new year. A big thank you to all of our guest writers, artists, and interviewees – it was a pleasure working with each and every one of you.

Our family recently got back from Renovation, the 69th Worldcon in Reno, Nevada and I'm still suffering from reentry into the everyday world. Cons really do exist in an alternate dimension. When you enter con-space, the outside world goes bye-bye, time runs differently, and geography compresses mightily. I deliberately did not bring my lap top with me and if my husband hadn't brought his Xoom with us, I would have remained happily ignorant to the stock market collapse. (Luckily he didn't brood too much or drastic measures would have had to be taken.) And I am officially a Master of Multi-dimensional Packing as I managed to cram four costumes plus pertinent accessories as well as all my everyday wear in one suitcase. Woot!

Con time I won't even discuss as most of you recognize that cons run on their own schedule. Though come to think of it, the con runners either planned for scope creep and padded their schedules or the temporal slide was minimal this con. Who knows – I *attended* this con rather than working it. Though the grown up's in our family (Wait, there are real, live grown ups in the Marier clan?) ended up volunteering in the kid's area. Funny how that happens.

Cont.

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FALL/WINTER 2011

Special points of interest:

- * Interviews with Sandra Odell and Jason Sizemore.
- * A comic by Chris Baldwin, a short story by Steven Bieler!
- * Thank you Bill Boyde—for proofing this!

And geography? I met fen from Australia, Ireland, France and Japan to name a few; and given our common interest, their homes just don't seem quite as far away as they really are. One of these days, I will make it to a convention outside the U.S. or Canada; but right now I will content myself with getting a handle on the increasing trickle of newly-translated, non-American SF. It's really amazing what is out there.

One criteria I have for judging a great con is how many things I want to go to all at exactly the same time. Renovation currently has the record of seven panels/events all at once. This sorry state of affairs occurred twice: once on Thursday at 11:00 am. and the second on Saturday at 1:00 pm. Argh! But only in con-space can I attend panel discussions about such disparate topics as Victorian flying carriages, researching piratical history, knitting, and zombie tropes. Bliss! And the zombie panel I made it to was purely by accident as my internal clock was malfunctioning. But I stayed as Seanan McGuire was one of the speakers. My favorite con quote came from that panel, courtesy of Seanan: "We do not like to think of ourselves as meat. We are beautiful robots."

This was The Kidlet's first Worldcon (though he has attended many other conventions), and he spent most of his time at the kid track where he, brace yourself, got to make both a boffer and a light saber (Both of which made it home. In one piece.), harness steam power with a putt-putt boat, play in a D & D game, take apart electronics and make steampunk goggles – not to mention attending concerts with mum and dad. Heck, *mum and dad* spent a great deal of time in kidspace 'cause the programming was just that good. He's already talking about going to Chicago next year. We shall see...

There were too many wonderful things going on...but a few deserve special mention. The Masquerade was gorgeous – and a big shout out to northwest fen who were well represented on the winners' podium. Congrats everyone! But I have rarely laughed as hard as I did during Masquerade halftime. Paul Cornell of *Doctor Who* fame ran an episode of the BBC game show, [Just a Minute](#). The rules are simple; a contestant must speak for precisely one minute “without repetition, hesitation or deviation” on a subject chosen by the host. Sounds easy doesn't it. Uh huh. This is one cutthroat game folks. I was ROTFLMAO'ing. Seanan McGuire won.

Humor was the order of this con for me as Dr. Demento brought his special blend of inspiringly demented music to the con. I grew up with him – and for those who remember him fondly, he's *still* broadcasting. Visit him [here](#) for his streamed show! And my own personal favorite: the tiki Dalek whose battle cry is “Exuberate! Exuberate!” Truly brilliant.

I want to go back to con-space. Please, oh please let it be soon! And in the meantime, I plan to have this 'zine join its' brethren in con-space; hopefully that will tide me over until Steamcon...

Yours,
The Editrix

BOOKS ON THE RUN

Renovation continued a new tradition that I hope becomes par for the course. Members were allowed to *download for free all of the Hugo-nominated works*. Five novels, novellas and novelettes; four short stories; seven non-fiction pieces; five graphic stories...and the list goes on. Even if you don't actually attend – this was major bang for your buck. I am still working my way through the novels. Here are my thoughts on two of them.

Blackout/All Clear

by Connie Willis

published by Ballantine Spectra

Normally I hate time travel pieces. Connie's series (which includes the Hugo- and Nebula award-winning **Doomsday Book** and the Hugo award-winning **To Say Nothing Of The Dog**) is one of the two exceptions. Like the others, these, while set in the same universe, stand alone and do not require knowledge of her other books to enjoy. History buffs will adore the lovingly recreated eras of the past she evokes in her work as well as the discombobulation current-day people experience when they head backwards on assignment. Both past and present merge as the three main characters race to figure what has gone awry and if it can be fixed. Recommended to those who love the work of Harry Turtledove and Lisa Mason.

Cryoburn

by Lois McMaster Bujold

published by Baen Books

Here's another stand-alone book even though it is part of a series - also with several Hugo and Nebula awards to its credit - which to my mind makes it especially nice to a new reader unfamiliar with the rest. Miles stands alone in this one as he's off on assignment with the rest of his family and friends off stage. While they are referred to, you don't need to know much about them as they don't affect the story. Fast-paced with several interesting twists and turns (including one of the most creative planetary invasion schemes I've come across in a while), Miles is in rare form as a simple mugging leads to a planet-wide conspiracy. Fun, fun, fun. Recommended to anyone who loves intelligently written space opera.

WEST WIND needs writers...
(both fiction and non), artists, layout and editing subject matter experts and anyone else who might be interested in helping produce this. Contact me at katina.marier@gmail.com for more info!

THE LAST STAR TREK PARODY

By Steven Bryan Bieler

© 1989, first appeared in *Pacific Magazine*

Capt. Kirk, Science Officer Spock, Chief Medical Officer "Bones" McCoy, and a geologist named Johnson, Jackson, or Chang beam down to an uncharted planet with breathable atmosphere, understandable natives, and a society resembling feudal Europe under the rule of Charlemagne. Despite their superior weaponry, the landing party is quickly captured by sword-swinging illiterates acting as agents of the insidious emperor who has eradicated any semblance of freedom from the planet. Johnson, Jackson, or Chang is killed. Kirk's shirt is ripped. McCoy is forced to provide medical care for the emperor's beautiful daughter, who has been stricken with terminal eyeliner, and from her learns that galactic war is imminent.

Meanwhile, Romulan starships have crossed the Neutral Zone and are attacking the Enterprise. Engineer Scott is in command and having a bad day: No. 4 shield has buckled, the warp engines are running amok, and he forgot his accent at home with his lunch. He decides that the ship can't take the pounding. He orders Lt. Uhura to contact Star Fleet Command, but the line is busy. Scotty pops the top off another beer and waits for the commercial to bail him out.

Down on the planet, Kirk seduces the emperor's daughter and learns the whereabouts of the rebel underground. The rebels are betrayed by spies and everyone is captured by the Klingons. Kirk challenges the head Klingon to a duel, first delivering a speech on universal peace. Spock computes the odds and McCoy holds the bets. The smart money is on the Klingon. He's twice Kirk's size and armed with a bazooka. Kirk only has his good looks and the Klingons have tied his shoelaces together. McCoy tells Spock to do something. Spock constructs a primitive molecular dehumidifier from old chicken bones and plugs the device into a convenient wall outlet. It works. Everyone escapes.

The emperor's daughter begs Kirk to stay with her, because she is in love with him and likes to have a man around the house. Kirk declines the offer. He is responsible for the lives of 400 crew members, and anyway he is already in love with the Enterprise. He feels guilty when he fools around. The emperor arrives on the scene in time for another speech by Kirk on the brotherhood of all living things, is swiftly humbled and promises a new way.

Spock constructs a primitive communicator from a pop-up toaster and contacts the ship. Scotty beams them aboard, but the transporter malfunctions and deposits Spock inside the Romulan flagship's video arcade. Now the Enterprise can't defend itself for fear of killing Spock. McCoy demands they do something. Kirk pounds his chair with his fist and punches buttons but can't find a station he likes. Scotty says the ship can't take the pounding. Kirk tells Scotty to stuff it. He orders Uhura to call the Romulans and is angered when they refuse to accept the charges. He has Uhura open the "hailing frequency," which permits him to make calls without paying for them, and lets the Romulans know he is through being Mr. Nice Guy. He threatens to activate the recently installed bilateral hemostat. The Romulans have never heard of a bilateral hemostat. They panic and head for home. They have been duped by a clever bluff, and Kirk will be expecting a little extra something in his next paycheck from Star Fleet Command.

Scotty succeeds in overhauling the transporter. He wipes the windshield and turns it on. Spock is returned to the Enterprise, where he describes his experience as fascinating. He scored 5 million points on Galactic Planet-Eater. Time again to enjoy the fruits of liberty. McCoy insults Spock. Spock insults McCoy. Kirk doesn't get the joke but chuckles anyway. He orders Sulu to get them out of this episode.

But somebody plugged in a hair dryer while the bilateral hemostat was running, and the engines run amok, rocketing everyone backward through time at Warp Eleventeen. Sulu hits the brakes and stops the ship in the 20th century. They are orbiting a primitive planet whose only economic and cultural activity is the production of an endless series of *Star Trek* movies. Hollywood agents start calling, and Kirk and company realize that they have, at last, come home. ●

Steven Bryan Bieler was crowned Ms. NizzFizz at a Relaxacon in 1981. All he got was a bowling trophy and no end of grief. He lives in Portland, blogs and writes fiction, and is retired from further NizzFizz competitions.

S BOOK REVIEWS BOOK REVIE

Border Crossings: A review of **Welcome to Bordertown**, edited by Holly Black and Ellen Kushner

Reviewed by Katrina Marier

Instinctively, you *know* Bordertown. It's everywhere. It's nowhere. It's a city that lies in the borderlands between Faerie (You can call it that; but don't call the inhabitants fairies unless you want your lights punched out. This means you.) and our World. The only place where humans and elves co-exist. You can't seek it; but you can find it. And since I'm not traveling as much as I used to, this helpful volume has a few pointers for your journey, including updates such as 'Bordertown Basics,' which is a crash course in etiquette plus songs, skip rope and nursery rhymes as well as street raps you'll hear on the streets of Bordertown. One thing to remember, it's been thirteen years since any of us crossed over so things *have* changed even though they've stayed the same.

Back in the 80's, one of my spiritual homes was Bordertown. I never did run away from home. *Thought* about it, mind you; but decided my love of hot showers and dislike of being assaulted which happened to a few kids I knew kept me from leaving. Though I did go several thousand miles away to college. Almost the same thing. But oh, I looked for Bordertown. At the Cherry Blossom Festival. At street fairs. In the musty, dimly lit backrooms of my fave used book shops. At cons. I know I've glimpsed it. From out of the corner of my eye, in locked, nameless rooms in office buildings that no one ever seems to have keys to, down trash-strewn alleys, at 1:00 am. at a few conventions I know... Now of course, I have a husband and child; so unless they would be willing to relocate with me, I'm not moving to Bordertown any time soon. *sigh* But *hoo boy* was I delighted to find a new Bordertown anthology available after a thirteen year hiatus: **Welcome to Bordertown**, edited by Holly Black and Ellen Kushner and available from Random House. Most of the previous suspe...err contributors are back with stories, namely Emma Bull. Will Shetterly, and Charles de Lint. Joining them are writers like Cory Doctorow, Patricia McKillip, Catherynne M. Valente, Nalo Hopkinson and many others. Go run and get a copy. Better yet, get several for trading purposes.

Seldom do I buy or read anthologies. Mostly because I usually end up liking only half the stories and feeling like I wasted my money. The Bordertown books are some of the rare exceptions. I read one and hunted down the others with a methodical frenzy usually associated with The Wild Hunt on the basis of the first. None of them disappointed. None. And I guard my tattered copies with a draconic frenzy (Always on the hunt for extras!) So it was inevitable that I pre-ordered the new one for my Nook several months ago. Within minutes of learning about its existence. It does *not* disappoint.

My favorite story is 'Shannon's Law' by Cory Doctorow which tells the tale of a young entrepreneur creating a cross-border computer network, (Note to self: now there's an employment opportunity for my software engineer husband. Selling point #3 in relocation plan.) using everything from carrier pigeons, magic mirrors, random number sequences turned into high art and parkour...among other things. Other stories of note include 'The Sages of Elsewhere' by Wil Shetterly (I soooo want to work at Elsewhere!), 'Crossings' by Janni Lee Simner, 'Our Stars, Our Selves' by Tim Pratt (Which points out something about astrology that I will gleefully remember to mention the next time I get into an argument with someone about it.), 'Elf Blood' by Annette Curtis Klause, 'Ours Are The Prettiest' by Nalo Hopkinson, and 'A Tangle of Green Men' by Charles de Lint. These are the stories which really stood out for me. 'We Do Not Come in Peace' by Christopher Barzak was the scariest. And they're all getting a reread and the above list of faves may change without warning. Comic fans take note: there is also a mini-graphic novel inside this book. But I'm already rereading this book. And then I'm going to pull out my paperback cache and reread those. *All the stories are good*. Really, really good. If you never fit in when you were younger, still don't fit in now, if you love urban fantasy, if you were geek before it was chic...oh just read the book. See ya at the border! Don't forget to bring your chocolate and coffee beans.

The website says ebook versions of the older titles are coming, but no dates have been confirmed. Audiobooks have been confirmed. Hopefully ebooks will be in the near future as the books themselves, except for **The Essential Bordertown**, are out of print and nigh impossible to find! So here's a handy dandy list for your pocket, virtual or otherwise:

The anthologies:

Borderland
Bordertown
Life on the Border
The Essential Bordertown

The novels:

Elsewhere and **Nevernever** by Wil Shetterly
Finder by Emma Bull

Websites:

<http://bordertownseries.com/>

Terri Windling

<http://www.terriwindling.com/>

<http://www.endicott-studio.com/>

Holly Black:

<http://www.blackholly.com/>

Ellen Kushner:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Kushner

<http://twitter.com/#!/EllenKushner>

WS BOOK REVIEWS BOOK REV

Soon I Will Be Invincible by Austin Grossman

Reviewed by Peggy Larreau

Ask yourself this question: "What would you need to take over the world?" If you have Malign Hypercognition Disorder and an IQ of over 300, which makes you an evil genius, you need four items: a mirror, a book, a doll, and a jewel. Such simple things, but are they really? Perhaps to someone of average intelligence, but not to Doctor Impossible, who has built armies out of fungus. To a man of his vision and genius, these four simple items are all you need. Of course, what kind of a story would it be if the melodramatic, self-aggrandizing villain could just take over the world. To make a story, you have to have someone willing to step up and thwart the actions of Doctor Impossible, more than just someone, given the scale of Doctor Impossible's attacks, you need a team of someones. You need a team of Champions. Unfortunately for the world and much to Doctor Impossible's delight the Champions are in a bit of disarray at the moment. But, when you are a down on your luck cyborg, an invitation to work with the greatest superhero of this time looks like a pretty good offer.

The intertwining stories of Doctor Impossible and Fatale, newest member of the Champions, as their pending show down comes nearer and nearer, make a fast and entertaining read. For anyone who grew up reading about the superheros that inhabited the worlds of the Marvel, DC, Dark Horse, or other comic/graphic novels, this book is your kind of story. Filled with alien princesses, mutated humans, cold war superheros, and a plethora of villainous acts, the book allows your imagination to draw in Grossman's vision of a world filled with superpeople.

The (Not So) Little Series That Could A review of the **Liaden Universe** by Sharon Lee and Steve Miller

By Katrina Marier

Most everyone has heard the story of how Star Trek was saved by the write-in campaign of fans. Well, I'm here to tell you about a series that's undergone a similar process: The **Liaden Universe**. The series almost failed to take off and there would probably only have been three books...except for the internet. Their publishers had told Lee & Miller that sales weren't sufficient to justify continuing. But unbeknownst to them, fans had discovered them and were so passionate about the series on the Usenet and rec.arts.sf.written groups and kept begging so earnestly for more that there are now 15 novels and numerous short stories set in this universe.

There is a reason why this is a series that just won't quit: it's just that good!

Why is it good? Let me expound upon the ways. First off, I like a good, rip-roaring space opera. Unlike most space opera, this one isn't strictly militaristic. And don't get me wrong, I *like* good military space opera. I'm a huge David Weber fan. But a universe where war isn't the main agent for chase is refreshing. Though a mercantile-based society might sound peaceful; it isn't. It's downright cutthroat with blood feuds and business deals gone beyond sour. Plus, when there are three human-descended cultures that don't like one another and yet must figure out how to get along, there's plenty of conflict. In one of the books, **Local Custom**, one of the plot lines deals with the attempt by cultural "purists" to suppress proof that the three cultures are all linguistically related, with the suppression starting off with one murder and nearly a second. Like I said, loads of conflict and action. Secondly, the characters are wonderful. They are vividly alive, well-rounded characters with flaws and quirks. They live, make mistakes, love and grow. They don't always get what they want and the conflict between familial duty and personal desires makes for good storytelling. Thirdly, the universe is an interesting one with lots of room to explore. I am convinced that it's out there. Somewhere around the corner. That being said, the Liaden books are 'the little series that could,' having survived moves to five different publishers, two of whom are now defunct. Del Rey published the first three books as mass-market paperbacks. These were later republished, with several subsequent novels by the now-defunct Meisha Merlin. All of these were then subsequently acquired and *republished* by Ace. E-versions were available from the also-defunct Embiid Publishing. But in 2007, Baen re-published the first 10 novels as ebooks, followed by two short story collections. New books began coming in 2009 with their latest, **Ghost Ship**, just out.

I love all of the books. But if I had to recommend one for readers unfamiliar with this universe, I would start with **Balance of Trade**. While set in the same universe, it is a stand-alone story which provides a great introduction to two of the major cultures depicted, the conflicts between them, and reasons for them. It's also a great coming-of-age story about a young man finding his way in the world. Behaving with integrity and honesty never goes out of style. To learn more, visit here, <http://www.korval.com/liad.htm> or your local library!

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF A HORRIFIC KIND...

A CHAT WITH JASON SIZEMORE OF APEX MAGAZINE

By Katrina Marier

I have to say, this is the first time I've ever interviewed anyone with their own personal Wiki page. One hears horror stories about pages being co-opted, hijacked and whatnot. I suspect the reality is much more mundane. What is it like having one and how often do you update it?

When you get a personal Wiki page, you receive a wax-sealed, gold-embossed invitation slid under your door that gives you secret urls and passwords where all the world famous personalities hobnob and drink tea with pinkies out.

If only.

People who know me that are reading this will not believe my next sentence as I'm all about the Google vanity search. I can't remember ever having visited my personal Wiki page. And just to prove a point, I'm going to stay humble and not run and look—damn it, had to go look. Ooh, aah... look at that, Maw, I'm in Wikipedia!

Having several friends who write, I am delighted to hear about and support sites such as yours where writers are *paid* for their hard work (Don't get me started on that soap box...) But I have to ask, what's your opinion on those who believe copyright laws should be liberalized to allow for free sharing of all such media? Cory Doctorow has argued that copyright holders should have a monopoly on selling and said laws should only come into play when a third party attempts to sell something under someone else's copyright. Seems to me that if this were to come into effect, it would drastically affect you. Your thoughts?

And I have to agree with your assessment of the \$.99 phenomenon in e-publishing. In my experience, most of them have been crap. After reading your thoughts about the mid list crisis, I was dismayed. Many of my favorite mid listers works are out of print (insert wail here) and I would happily pay more than \$.99 to get a copy for my e-reader. Maybe not as much as I would for a hardback; but paying as much as I would for a paperback or trade paperback seems reasonable. How do you think this issue will pan out? [I have friends who are writers; when they eat regularly, they tend to write more. Or is that the other way around?]

I can never wrap my head around the idea of selling 80,000 words of fiction for 99 cents (in a non-promotional manner). Even if it is an author's backlist. Everybody makes a big deal about John Locke, he of the one million 99 cents book sales. People keep telling me he sold a million Kindle copies because he's a great writer. If that's the case, he would have sold a heck of a lot at \$2.99.

Why \$2.99? Because that is the threshold that Amazon and Barnes and Noble have set to delineate the difference in receiving a 35% royalty and a 70% royalty. Mr. Lock makes 35 cents per 99 cent book sold. Easy math tells us he makes \$350,000. At \$2.99, he clears \$2.05 per Kindle copy sold (give or take a penny or two depending on the size of the novel). To make \$350,000, he 'only' has to sell 170,732 copies. I say if his books are good enough to sell one million copies at 99 cents, they are good enough to sell 170,732 copies at \$2.99. And this way, he doesn't devalue his work. Or everybody elses'.

Online 'zine, internet magazine or just plain 'zine? I know what you are; but what in heck, what should I call you???

There is also digital zine, ezine, digital publication, blah blah blah. On our website, we simply call ourselves a magazine.



In an article you wrote for Tor back in 2009, you talked about your crusade to get small press publishers the respect they deserve. From what I can see, your advocacy has been tireless. But in another interview with Mike Duran earlier this year, you seemed cautiously optimistic. Looking back, do you feel progress has been made? What more needs to be done?

Progress has been made. Less so from any sort of concerted effort by the small press, and more so by the function of technology. Niche publishers (read: small press) will become more important as bookstores keep dying off. Plenty of larger publishers will die, if simply because it takes forever to move the Titanic a full ninety degrees. Plenty of small press publishers will die, but there are a lot of us. And we can regenerate our numbers quickly! As more people become accustomed to buying from the small press, the more respect they will receive.

It helps, too, that some of the best books in the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror have come from the small press in the past few years. I point you to the catalog of Nightshade Books (anything by Paolo Bacigalupi or Laird Barron) and Small Beer Press (anything by Kelly Link or Karen Joy Fowler) as consistent publishers of quality small press work.

I was also delighted to read that you often tell students to attend fan conventions. As a con-goer and con-runner, I was thrilled. I know you attend cons back east. Any chance of coming to Norwescon – we are traditionally very friendly to small press publishers.

Hm. Norwescon sure is a long way from home. I'd love to attend, but long trips like that are difficult due to having a day job. And two small children.

I'd love to attend someday. Maybe if I can become world famous (hey, that Wikipedia article is a start, right?), I can earn a guest of honor invite and visit Norwescon in style. ☐

I find your melding of sci fi and horror interesting; because, as a rule, I love one and hate the other (My profound respect for HP Lovecraft notwithstanding.) Why meld them? What do you feel each genre brings to the other. And a devotee of one but not the other, what am I missing out on?

So many people have a kneejerk negative reaction to horror. Yet, a great deal of popular modern science fiction is couched in a shroud of horror. The fact that Apex called attention to it gave us a label as being 'too dark' for most people, when the reality was that the stuff we're publishing is no different than the science fiction coming from places like Tor or Pyr. For that reason, I've dropped the whole "melding of science fiction and horror" aspect of our brand.

Science fiction brings the plot. Horror packs the emotion. Put them together and you can produce some impressive work.

So since Apex specializes in the fusion of sci-fi and horror, do you now have a name for your sub genre? (Should that be scor-for?) Sometimes I think naming a genre can be a two-edged sword when the term encapsulates the genre to such an extent that people hear the word and dismiss it, thinking they already know what it is, was and ever will be.

See previous answer.

Many of the genre labels started out as clichés; but I will admit, I love the terms 'cyberpunk,' 'steampunk,' etc. Seems to me that many of the most successful magazines seem to be narrow and deep rather than broad and shallow as it were. Any thoughts as to why? Do you think it relates to the increasing fragmentation of the web and our attention spans?

Specialization breeds interest in those who are fans of what you're bringing. I want good dark science fiction, I go to Apex Magazine. If I crave weird or interstitial work, I head on over to Clarkesworld. I like to think having a niche and successfully publishing in the niche gets you labeled as an expert. You know, much like how a cardiologist is a doctor that is a heart specialist.

Perhaps that sounds facetious, and perhaps I mean to be, but if you stretch that metaphor, twist it around, it might make enough sense so that you'll see what I'm getting at.

I was very interested to read your thoughts about the state of sci-fi movies in the interview you did for Horrorville. I'm not sure when the interview came out; but given what's been coming out this summer (*Super 8*, *Attack of the Block*), I'm not entirely certain the genre is dead...though I do feel that Hollywood tends to fall back on known quantities, hence the rash of superhero movies. What do you think, given that we have a plethora of them coming out over the course of this summer?

So much dreck comes out of Hollywood these days. Thankfully, much of the good stuff is science fiction or fantasy. District 9. Wall*E. Let the Right One In. Human Centipede. Okay, kidding about that last one! In broad terms, much of the original screenplays that are produced that make a mark in the film industry seems to be from genre material. Perhaps I feel this way due to my skewed tastes toward genre, but it is hard to deny that our geeky corner of the universe is helping to tent pole Hollywood.

Cont. on pg. 8

SCIENCE FICTION TRIVIA

1. In the movie, **Logan's Run**, humans are allowed to live until they turn 30. This differs from the book by William F. Nolan; in his story, humans live until they turn how old?
2. What is Captain Kirk's brother's name? What episode of Classic Trek did he appear in and who played him?
3. Did Godzuki ever appear in Japan's Godzilla films?
4. What pen name did Edgar Rice Burroughs publish his first Mars story under?
5. In the film, **2001: A Space Odyssey**, what did Hal sing?
6. What food can destroy a Slitheen?

Cont. from page 7

I thought I was a print purist; *then* I got an e-reader. I know Apex Online is exactly that and I was interested to learn that your subscriptions are done via Weightless Books. But they're still PDF's. Ugh. Never did like them. Any chance Apex Online will be available in formats for various e-readers?

We're Apex Magazine. ☐

Weightless offers are our books in ePub and mobi formats (along with PDF). Meaning you can read the magazine on nearly any computer or tablet.

The magazine is also for sale in Kindle format through Amazon and for the Nook in the Barnes and Noble store.

Apex began as a labor of love back in 2004. As you approach a decade in the business, have you achieved everything you set out to do? And have you managed to remain faithful to your original objectives?

My original objective was to make Apex successful enough for it to become my day job. That hasn't happened yet. I'm hoping our recent national distribution deal will be the last big step toward that dream.

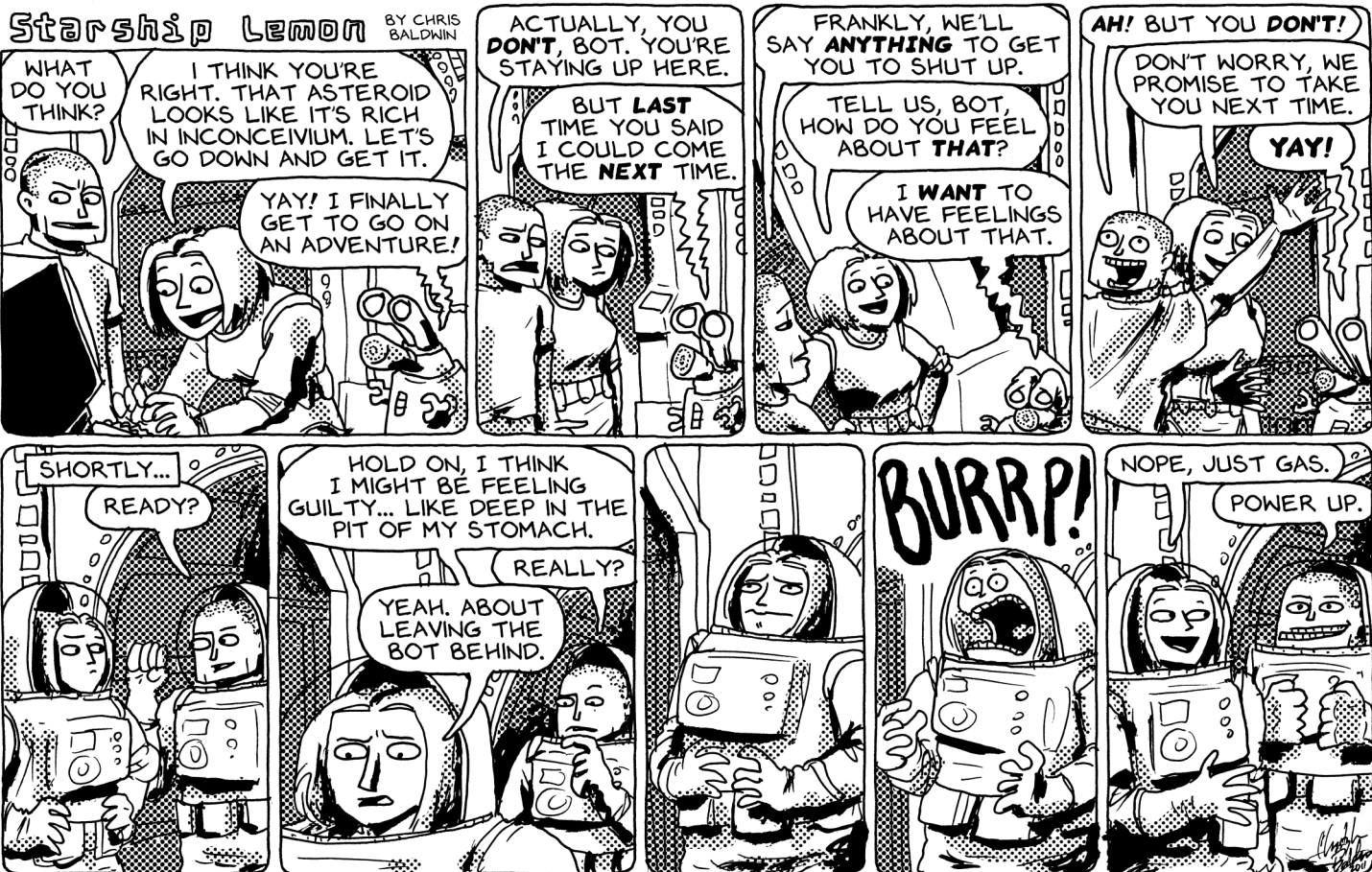
My primary original objective was to not stop having fun doing this stuff. So far, so good.

Any hints about what's coming down the pipeline?

We're preparing our national line of books. Right now, the first three appears to be titles from Brian Keene and Gary Braunbeck, and a second volume of our popular Dark Faith anthology by Maurice Broaddus and Jerry Gordon.

Apex Magazine will continue being awesome. I've hired Lynne Thomas to take over the ezine starting with her first issue this coming December. Cat Valente has done an amazing job, but she's moving on to other interests (and thank you Cat for all your great work!).

<http://www.apexbookcompany.com> Born the son of an unemployed coal miner in a tiny Kentucky Appalachian villa named Big Creek (population
<http://www.apex-magazine.com> 400), Jason fought his way out of the hills to the big city of Lexington. He attended Transylvania University
<http://www.jason-sizemore.com> (real school with its own vampire) and received a degree in computer science. Since 2004, he has owned and operated Apex Publications. He is the editor of five anthologies, a Stoker Award loser, an occasional writer, and usually can be found wandering the halls of hotel conventions seeking friends and free food.



A FEW THOUGHTS FROM OUR GUEST ARTIST...

I am a cartoonist. I was born and raised in Massachusetts among maple syrup and autumn foliage, and am now Seattle-based, enjoying perfect summers and no snow shoveling. I am currently (twice weekly) writing and drawing the sci-fi humor epic web comic, **Spacetrowler**, which can be found at: <http://www.spacetrowler.com>

I have been doing comics since I could hold a crayon, and have been posting them online since 1996, starting with my daily 11-year slice-of-life dry-wit webcomic, **Bruno** (<http://www.brunostrip.com>), followed by my daily 6-year all-ages funny adventure comic **Little Dee** (<http://www.littledee.net>).

I also write and draw regularly for **MAD Magazine**, do illustration and oil painting commissions, and illustrate educational children's books and newspaper serial stories.

My comics have been written up by io9.com, the **Washington Post**, the **UK Daily Telegraph**, **Wired**, and **Salon Magazine** among others. My comic **Little Dee** had been represented by United Syndicate, and my comic **Bruno** was optioned for a movie (never made) by director Jeremiah Checkik.

When I'm not drawing comics, I'm cooking (and often posting recipes at <http://www.cookrookery.com>), going for walks with my sweetie, or playing with our four cats. When drawing, I'm usually listening to science fiction audiobooks and trying not to eat all the cookies in the house.

GOOD BOOKS OR THE ONES NPR'S LIST OF THE TOP 100 SF & F BOOKS MISSED

By Jeanine Swanson

National Public Radio invited listeners to cast ballots in their annual summer reader's survey. More than 60,000 ballots were cast in their reader's survey, the list includes descriptions and links to more information about the book or book series.

I was thrilled that NPR chose to spotlight science fiction and fantasy during their annual summer readers' survey; as I'm happy with anything that encourages readers to delve into these works. However, I was disappointed that several wonderful writers and their works were missing from the list: Poul Anderson, Alfred Bester, David Brin, Octavia Butler, CJ Cherryh, Samuel R. Delaney, Harlan Ellison, Philip Jose Farmer, Alan Dean Foster, Fritz Leiber, Andre Norton, Frederik Pohl, Spider Robinson, Fred Saberhagen, Robert Silverberg, Clifford Simak, Bruce Sterling, SM Stirling, Ted Sturgeon, James Tiptree, Harry Turtledove, Jack Vance, AE Van Vogt, John Varley...and many more.

Robert Asprin's **MythAdventures** are also missing from the top 100 list and from the list of 237 finalists. And that makes sense for a top SF & F list. His stories are fun, but they're definitely not "important" to the genre. (Though I'd argue that many that are included in the list are also not important. But that's a different comment all together.) I love the **MythAdventures** series because the stories are whimsical and include a liberal smattering of puns. The books never fail to lift my spirits when I'm feeling a bit blue or just want a light, happy read. Most of the characters are recurring so they start to feel like old, silly friends after several readings. Aahz is a demon (dimensional traveler) and Skeeve is his apprentice magician. Deva is the merchant capitol where one may be able to get a good deal with a deveel. Though the good part is likely for the deveel and not for you. All in all it's a fun little world. You should go there. Start at the beginning with **Another Fine Myth**.

Terry Pratchett's **Discworld** series is also a fabulous source for quashing the blues. **Small Gods & Going Postal** are on the NPR list, but I think the entire series should have been included. Like the **MythAdventures** series, characters in the Discworld series are also recurring though not in every book. I'm fonder of the Discworld series because the humor is sharper, the writing tighter, and the characters are more fully formed, including the character of the world itself. I'm especially fond of Carrot Ironfounderson, a six-foot-six-inch dwarf. He's sweet, naïve, and believes in truth, justice, and the Anhk-Morpork penal code. Other favorite characters are Granny Weatherwax (witch), Nanny Ogg (witch), and Magrat Garlick (reluctant witch). The Librarian of Unseen University who was accidentally magicked into an orangutan and refuses to be transformed back. The Luggage is constructed of sapient pearwood and is intensely loyal to its owner. Fear the Luggage.

Sometimes escapism is about eluding the blues. Sometimes escapism has nothing to do with the doldrums and is simply a desire to explore another world, examine an alien culture, or probe another way of thinking. That's why I like S.M. Stirling's trilogy **Dies the Fire, The Protector's War, and A Meeting at Corvallis**. These three books are the beginning of Stirling's Embervers series and explore a different (yet familiar) world, examine an alien (yet familiar) culture, and definitely probe different (yet familiar) ways of thinking. The trilogy is about the struggles of a few groups following a world-wide event that somehow alters physical laws so that most modern technology does not work. One must be willing to suspend disbelief about the events following the cataclysm and how quickly people band together to survive. Once you abandon disbelief you can immerse yourself.

Two "good" groups are followed in the trilogy: the Bearkillers and Clan Mackenzie. Both groups function with high expectations regarding moral behavior as defined by supporting the members of their groups and avoiding harm to others. The Bearkillers start as a small group that survive a crash in a small plane. The small group acquires the name Bearkillers and a reputation for fierceness on their trek from the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho to the Willamette Valley ranch owned by one of the Bearkiller group. The group kills a bear when it attacks their leader after another group member enrages it by shooting it with an arrow. Bearkillers carefully add members to their group during their trek. Clan Mackenzie pivots on Juniper Mackenzie, a folksinger and Wiccan priestess. Juniper and her daughter, a few friends, and coven members manage to make their way to Juniper's cabin in the woods. The small group begins to farm the land and collaborate with neighboring farms.

The Bearkillers intervene when members of Clan Mackenzie are ambushed by cannibals. The two groups start to work together against the Portland Protective Association. The PPA is lead by Norman Arming, a megalomaniac who gives history professors and members of the Society for Creative Anachronism a bad name. A lidless eye a la the Eye of Sauron is the heraldic device of the PPA so it's no surprise that the early years following the change are bloody and fearful in the Portland area. Although Arming as Lord Protector saves many people, he also re-introduces slavery and torture. The Lord Protector rules from Astoria to Pendleton. He sends troops to lands outside PPA territory in an attempt to gain more tax payers or slaves. The Bearkillers and Clan Mackenzie train scouts and successfully oppose the PPA in skirmishes. The last attempt by the Lord Protector results in the War of the Eye. The Bearkillers and Clan Mackenzie organize other survivor groups and together they are able to win the war against PPA troops. This ends the PPA's attempt at conquering lands south of Portland.

The different factions of the Willamette Valley create an organization they call "The Meeting". The organization is dedicated to keeping the peace among the factions.

Which authors and work do you think are missing from the NPR list? Send your response to info@nwsfs.org And you can read the entire list here:

<http://www.npr.org/2011/08/11/139085843/your-picks-top-100-science-fiction-fantasy-books>

BEAM ME UP SCOTTY...SCOTTY, I'M WAAAITING!

A REVIEW OF NIGHT OF THE LIVING TREKKIES BY KEVIN DAVID ANDERSON AND SAM STALL

By Katrina Marier

For the record, I dislike zombies. No, let's revisit that statement: I *loathe* them. With one slight exception: zombies done for laughs. Loved the movies **Fido** and **Shaun of the Dead**. Which is the only reason I was willing to give this book a try. Zombies invade a sci-fi convention – a situation ripe for humor of all kinds.

How geekdom responds to the threat of the zombie apocalypse is both a ripping fast-paced plot and genuinely funny parody. A withdrawn and disillusioned army vet is home from a couple of tours in Afghanistan. Given his issues, working as a hotel bellhop provides the quiet, mindless routine he craves. Then GulfCon begins – and then the already surreal convention becomes a nightmare when con-goers begin morphing into cannibalistic zombies. I had this recurring sense of *deja vu* when reading the con scenes. Any fan will. As the flesh-eaters begin to overrun the city, the vet and a small group of survivors (Armed with bat'leths and lipas, no less.) must escape. The combination of horror, camp, **Star Trek** trivia and zingy one-liners made this a nice summer read.

This book was coherently and tightly plotted with a few surprises along the way. Especially the ending which has a logical curve ball that I, at least, haven't seen in most zombie books. Those familiar with Octavia Butler's **Patternmaster** trilogy might see it coming; it makes for one of the more reasonable explanations for zombie-hood that I've seen out there.

And given the appetite out there for literary mashups, a la **Pride and Prejudice and Zombies** (Also published by Quirk Books just like this one. Hmmm...) and the like, someone was bound to combine sci-fi fandom and zombies. The authors must be fans as the parodies of fandom and sci-fi culture aren't mean-spirited in the least. And die-hard Trek fans will want to go back and catch all the winks and nods to Kirk, Spock and the rest.

Another reason I liked it is that there is a hint of hope at the end that the human race might actually survive. So despite the glut of zombie books out there, this one, to me at least, was a breath of fresh air.

So if you enjoyed the movies **Fido**, **Shaun of the Dead** or **Galaxy Quest**, or the book, **Bimbos of the Death Sun**, you will most likely be in stitches.

Kevin David Anderson
<http://www.kevindavidanderson.com/>

Sam Stall
Not much up for him; but he does have his own site:
<http://www.samstall.com/home.html>

I was delighted to have the chance to sit down and talk with Norwescon's first Clarion West Scholarship recipient, Sandra Odell. Sandra has had pieces published in **Brain Harvest**, **Drabblecast**, **Jim Baen's UNIVERSE** and other speculative fiction magazines. She has also received four honorable mentions from the L. Ron Hubbard's Writers of the Future Contest.

What's coming up in the writerly pipeline?

Dun-dun-dun! Working on a short story inspired by a friend's description of checking the basement anytime her mother heard a sound, making certain the basement door was locked. She described this to me at dinner; and I could feel the chills, the cobwebs on my face, and so I am exploring that fear of the dark. Listening to her talk about this, I asked her please don't scare me away from my food because my food is really, really good.

Yeah, that would be a problem when eating out.

Late 2010 or early 2011, one of my stories, 'For Fear of Little Men,' is appearing in Horror Bound Magazine's Fear of the Dark anthology (released as a trade paperback). It's all about things that go bump in the night, things under the bed, in the closet, or in the shadows. I'll also be in Andromeda Spaceways In Flight Magazine, in issue #51, 'Following in Harlan's footsteps'

As in Harlan Ellison? That's who I think of every time I hear the name.

No. I just like the name. It's one of my gentler stories. Harlan found a home there; it's one of Australia's biggest magazines.

I'm also reworking one of my Clarion West stories for a Lovecraft-inspired anthology. Historical Lovecraft...

...As if it were real?

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

A CHAT WITH SANDRA ODELL

Victorian era or in 1905 or set in the Elizabethan era. Reworking the story to see what I can make of that, and then I'll send it off and keep my fingers crossed.

Interesting. Are you sure this isn't evolving into steampunk?

(Not this piece, but) I do have two steampunk ideas.

You know I love steampunk! And speaking of Clarion West, I was delighted you received the scholarship and were able to attend...now that it's been a month or two and the messages have had time to sink in, can you articulate how Clarion has affected your writing?

Clarion made me a stronger writer first and foremost by driving home a greater awareness of what a reader brings to the story. The words I put on the page may tell the story, but a reader's perceptions and pre-conceived notions will influence how they absorb and react to the story. I made a conscious decision to try something new every week of Clarion West, a style or subject I've never tackled before. Some of my stories were better received than others, as much for the subject as the presentation in two instances. We learn more from our failures than our successes, and I took away a great deal from the reactions to both of those stories, both in how I look at the reader's reaction, and in refusing to give up (on what I felt was a strong idea).

I also took away an appreciation for the elasticity of an idea, the depth and weight of detail an idea can hold without bogging down the story. Yes, there comes a point where too much is just that, but the critiques expanded horizons I didn't even know I had.

You seem to be gravitating towards horror – is that where your voice is going?

I like to think of myself as a writer first, genre be damned. Disguising broader concepts such as love, hate, morality, and honor as fantastic locations or events makes them accessible to readers, and, I hope, encourages the next "What if?" I write children's stories, lighter fantasy fare, and what I like to think of as gentle stories, the ones born of a sense of wonder and magic.

About 20 years ago, I was friends with an editor of a real small press horror magazine, and he sent me a few issues. I was reading them, and I found myself saying, "I can do this." That was my first experiment. As time went on, I became more interested in terror rather than horror. I tend towards darker stories because they hold up a mirror to the parts of ourselves that often take us by surprise, the fears, angers, hates, and doubts. We're often not allowed to express such feelings in public; they're inconvenient, not easily bundled in bright, shiny packaging. Writing those stories allows readers to go two-out-of-three with their personal demons. Either that or I enjoy luring people in with a false sense of security before taking the hooks to them.

What do you consider the difference between horror and terror? Or is it like porn, where there is no one definition, but you know it when you see it?

Horror for me tends to be external – a big monster, a horrific event, someone does a horrible thing. Whereas terror is very personal, very internal.

Ah, because not everyone is afraid of the same thing.

Someone is terrorizing you. Those things you fear in the shadows, terror comes from the human condition.

Freddie Krueger vs. *The Turn of the Screw*.

Yes, but also a fascination with that; because if you are able to look at that, face terror down in yourself, there's always strength and beauty on the other side. You may not recognize it; it may not be lollipops or flowers. But if you can face it, it's there.

Have you read a lot of Lovecraft?

I've read some. I prefer Stoker myself.

Stoker's great. What other horror classics have you read?

Oh boy, well let's see. *Dracula* of course.

Stoker again, OK.

Frankenstein. *The Invisible Man*. I love Stephen King's work. Another great horror writer is Robert Bloch; the subtlety of his work heightens the horror for me. Robert M. McCammon is another author whose work can be a bit over-the-top (adventure-wise that is) but who can also be very, very subtle.

Have you read any of Clark Ashton Smith's works? He is a past master of the short story form.

He's been recommended to me; but no I haven't read any of his works.

He writes mostly weird sci-fi and weird fantasy, often with an overlay of lingering horror. Vance's *Dying Earth* is probably the closest to his work in tone and possibly subject matter. Speaking of such, it's hard to keep up with the new while remembering the old. Seems like there is some good work out there that slips through the cracks.

Very, very true. There is so much; and you *don't* want to lose track of it. Another one of my favorite authors (sadly out of print) is Manly Wade Wellman. I love his short story, 'Owls Hoot In Daylight.' And his Silver John novel, *Lost and Lurking*, while not a true horror novel, has elements of horror, darkness, and suspense.

So horror and terror are part of a continuum?

Yes.

Do you think horror will always be an element of your writing? And what do you imagine yourself writing ten years from now?

Horror will still have a place in my work; but that's not *all* I'll be writing. One recurring theme in my stories is redemption. Redemption not in a religious sense, but in a personal one. Stories are conflict. Without that step to overcome fear, or struggle to overcome a past evil, there is no story.

Cont'd on pg. 14

One of my favorite of my own stories deals with a couple who have died and been sent to Hell. The demon in charge of their case decided that it would be perfect if each confessed their sins to one another. But as husband and wife do this, they realize that they still deeply love one another and that their love is more important than the little blotches that sent them to Hell. To me, that is very important. And I want to keep writing about it; because I hope that there is always something out there worth redemption.

Reminds me of a commentator, writing about one of my favorite works, **The Tale of Genji**, where the commentator compares the Tale to the Buddhist search for enlightenment; saying that like the lotus which emerges from mud, the characters endure love affairs, murders, and death to attain enlightenment.

True. There's a country song that says if you're going through hell, just keep on going. There's always a struggle to find something of beauty in our lives.

You were careful to make the distinction between personal and religious redemption. In my experience, culture is either unaware or unfamiliar with redemption other than in a religious context.

You need to be careful to state which culture you are referring to in this instance.

Pop culture.

Pop culture, yes. Due to the obsession with immediate gratification, redemption is a lost word with a lost meaning. Over and over we see public figures saying, "I'm sorry. I did it." or "I was a drug-using, seal-clubbing, child-whipping loser; but I went through counseling and am now better." And we see them on talk shows.

We don't want redemption because it's hard work. We want the quick fix. The word redemption is most often heard when referring to coupons.

Chuckle. Sad but true, unfortunately.

Without the struggle for or against something, there is no growth, no reason to learn from mistakes. Work like this builds character. This may be a cliché, but it's true. And a good writer of fiction makes certain that his characters grow in their stories as we should in real life.

Science fiction is often described as a literature of ideas. Why do you think that is and does all science fiction live up to that ideal?

In as much as any literature is that of ideas. What separates science fiction, and the host of sub-genres that sprang fully-formed from its forehead, from other literary forms is that science fiction isn't afraid to take those ideas and play dress-up. Science fiction is the little kid with hands on hips, declaring, "But I want to be a ninja alien pirate who saves the magic princess! Why can't I?" And the other forms say, "Because it's not real, that's why." and continue sedately on their way, certain that their way is the only way because, well, they're firmly rooted in respectable literary reality. What many readers and, unfortunately, writers, have forgotten is that the majority of westerns, the historical fictions, the novel of character, the modern tales, legal/medical/spy thrillers, are no more real than any science fiction story because the writers created them whole cloth. Sure, they may be well researched, or even "based on a true story", but fiction is, by its very nature, not real no matter how loudly someone may proclaim otherwise.

Science fiction isn't afraid to admit to this. Science fiction wants to dream, to reach for the stars, the talking squid, or the One Ring. Are all dreams created equal? Nope. But that doesn't mean we should stop dreaming them. Not every dreamer can be an Ellison, a Lucas, a Gaiman, a Le Guin, or a Verne. Then again, not every dreamer can be an Odell, so I'm not giving up.

Character is another word that seems to be vastly overrated in pop culture

For pop culture, character is something that ends after an hour-long episode.

And consequently, no one believes in it. When someone falls off the bandwagon (again), we've seen it all before.

Or if there's suffering on TV, it's clean cut. It's grim and horrific but neatly wrapped up in the end.

So cut and dried with the black hat vs. the white hats. Real life doesn't work that way and a good writer recognizes that. A good writer will say, "Hand me your white hat. Here's a grey one to replace it." And even the villain's black hat is never completely black. A villain is never a villain in his own eyes.

Sometimes I think that's why anime is popular now because the Japanese recognize that ambiguity.

I agree. And the best fiction does that too.

Silly question, but does Doug read your stories?

Each and every one.

Does he read them before, during or after the writing process.?

Doug reads as part of my editing process. After I finish the first draft, I'll let the story sit for a few days to purge it from immediate memory, and then take the edit hatchet and a fistful of continuity putty to it. Then I turn it over to hubby dearest; he's supported my work long enough that his eye is trained to look for problem areas I know are there but still can't see, and the sweet spots that let me know I'm doing it right. I'll take another editing pass after his read, and then listen to him read the story out loud, a critical part of the process. Hearing the words out loud gives a better understanding of how the eye will read them. The fact that I like his voice doesn't hurt, either.

And as a fellow mom, is it a challenge, incorporating writing time with everything else in your life? Or perhaps a better question is (since you obviously manage it quite well) what techniques work for you? How did you discover them (Trial-and-error, lightning bolt from heaven, what)?

It is deucedly difficult to make time to write at home, there is always something else that needs doing: laundry, dishes, kids, mail, bills, this, that, the other. I head to the local library, or to a friend's house, at least twice a week for quality writing time (note I didn't say time of quality writing). While I prefer to write at the library, I find I am much more productive at my friend's house. He doesn't have wireless, and it's amazing what you can accomplish when you don't have the distraction of the internet.

And finally, milk or dark?

Milk, dark, white, semi-sweet, bittersweet, yes.

Want to see more of her work? Check out the following:

"In The Shadow of God, There is Fire" in TRIANGULATIONS: LAST CONTACT from Parsec Ink (available at BN.com and Amazon.com)

"Life Line" at CROSSED GENRES (<http://crossedgenres.com/archives/031-heroes-heroines/life-line-by-sandra-m-odell/>)

"Following In Harlan's Footsteps" in Issue #51 of ANDROMEDA SPACEWAYS INFLIGHT MAGAZINE (<http://www.andromedaspaceways.com/>)

"Two Steps Forward" coming August 31st in Issue #3 of FANTASTIQUE UNFETTERED (<http://www.fantastique-unfettered.com/>) Scroll down to the July 8, 2011 entry for a peek at the cover art inspired by the story.

TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. 21
2. George Samuel Kirk (aka Sam) played by Shatner. Sam is seen briefly as a corpse in Operation—Annihilate!
3. No. Godzuki was a mainstay of the Godzilla animated series, co-produced by Hanna-Barbera and Toho in 1978. There were two seasons.
4. He submitted 'Under the Moons of Mars' under the pseudonym, Normal Bean, as a joke. **All-Story Magazine** changed it to Norman Bean.
5. Daisy, Daisy
6. Vinegar
- 7.

If you've read this far, you've reached the end. Yeah, that's right. The. End. See you next issue. Now go home.