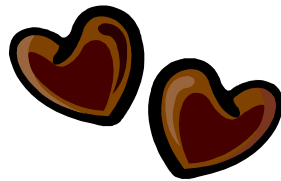




ASFACTS 2011

FEBRUARY "TEENAGE DREAM/POKER FACE" LOVE ISSUE



ENMU WILLIAMSON LECTURESHIP SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, APRIL 1

The 35th annual Jack Williamson Lectureship will be held Friday, April 1, at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. The theme of this year's event is "Six Minutes into the Future: SF in Film and TV." Special guests for 2011 are Michael Cassutt and Melinda Snodgrass, with Connie Willis serving as Mistress of Ceremonies. Events include a luncheon and various panel discussions in the afternoon.

A campus tradition since 1977, the Williamson Lectureship annually draws well-known authors to visit the ENMU campus and discuss the interactions of science and the humanities.

The Lectureship honors Williamson, long-time science-fiction author and professor of English who passed away in 2006. Williamson's novella, "The Ultimate Earth," captured a Hugo Award in 2001, and his last novel, *The Stonehenge Gate*, was released by Tor in 2005.

The Lectureship starts informally on March 31 when various writers read at 6:00 pm in the Jack Williamson Liberal Arts Building.

The luncheon takes place 11:45 am Friday, April 1, in the Campus Union Ballroom, and costs a mere \$8.00 (payable at the door). Reservations are needed, however, by Friday, March 25. Call Patrice Caldwell at (505) 562-2315 or email her at Patrice.Caldwell@enmu.edu.

The SF/Fantasy panel discussions take place 3:30-6:00 pm in the Williamson Special Collections Room of Golden Library, and are free of charge. Exact panel topics still are pending.

The High Plains Film Festival, being held the same weekend, plans to acknowledge the Lectureship with a screening of *Universe in 1/10 of an Hour* on Friday, and screenings of SF-themed films 1:00-3:00 pm on Satur-

day, April 2, in Buchanan Hall of the ENMU Music Building. The screenings are free and open to the public.

REDWALL AUTHOR DIES

British author Brian Jacques died February 5, following emergency surgery for an aortic aneurysm. He was 71 years old.

Jacques published his juvenile novel *Redwall*, about a collection of anthropomorphic mice, badgers, voles and other creatures, in 1986. Jacques followed *Redwall* with an additional 20 volumes in the series, including *The Rogue Crew*, which is scheduled to be released later this year.

The series was adapted into a popular animated series as well as an opera. In addition to the *Redwall* series, Jacques also wrote three volumes in his *Flying Dutchman* series, beginning in 2001. And Jacques published two collections of short stories, and a couple of picture books.

Jacques was born in June 1939, and grew up near the Liverpool docks. He dropped out of school when he was 15 to become a merchant seaman. Other careers, as a policeman and dockworker followed. In the 1960s, he formed a band in Liverpool with his brothers.

Jacques's interest in writing started at a young age

UPCOMING ASFS MEETINGS

- **Tonight:** A visit from time-traveling author Diana Gabaldon, plus the release of this *ASFacts*...
- **March 11:** Time for the traditional ASFS Auction with author Robert Vardeman at the helm. Please look for 2-6 items to donate for the club's cause, and some cash to spend.
- **March 25:** Bubonicon 44 Guest nominations meeting, most likely in Page One's community room.
- **April 8:** Local authors Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck visit to talk about James S.A. Corey's *Leviathan Wakes*. Also, the Spring issue of *ASFacts* will be out (deadline Sun, April 3).
- **May 13:** Engagement Party for Kevin Hewett and Randi Tinkham. Cake and punch. Details to come. Location TBD.
- **June 10:** Program unknown at present. Probably an author visit...

Craig Chrissinger, normal editor. Darth Vader, guest editor each December. Please Send All Correspondence to — PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176-7257. Contact: (505) 266-8905 or via cwraig@nmlia.com. *ASFACTS* published February, April, July & October for the Albuquerque SF Society. *SITHFACTS* out each December. NEXT DEADLINE: Sun, April 3.
Club Officers: Kevin Hewett & Craig Chrissinger, co-Zec Secs (505) 266-8905. Jessica Coyle, Moderator. Harriet Engle, Alternator. Cupid, Holiday Host. **Bubonicon Co-Chairs:** Kristen Dorland (505) 459-8734 & Craig Chrissinger.

and when he was ten, he was caned by a teacher who couldn't believe that he could write the story he had turned in. He hosted a long-running radio show about authorial concerns, *Jakestown*, on BBC Radio Merseyside.

ALBUQ SF SIGNINGS/EVENTS SET FOR FEBRUARY & MARCH

Several signings by New Mexico authors and SF-related events have been set up for February and March right here in Albuquerque. So, please stop by these events and say howdy to your favorite writer or film presenter – you might even purchase something while you're at it! Events coming up include:

+ **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2:00 PM:** Part-time Santa Fe author Diana Gabaldon will talk about and sign *An Echo in the Bone* and *The Exile: An Outlander Graphic Novel* at Page One Bookstore (southwest corner of Montgomery and Juan Tabo NE).

+ **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 7:00 PM:** ASFS member Bradford Lyau talks about and signs his first non-fiction book, *The Anticipation Novelists of the 1950s French Science Fiction: Stepchildren of Voltaire* (released as volume 24 of *Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy*), at Page One Bookstore on Montgomery NE.

+ **SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2:30 PM:** Several New Mexico authors will talk about and sign the anthology *Golden Reflections* and the solo novel *Deep State*. Participating are editors Joan Saberhagen and Robert Varde-man, plus Daniel Abraham, Jane Lindskold, John Maddox Roberts and Walter Jon Williams. This mass event takes place at Page One Bookstore on Montgomery NE.

+ **SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2:30 PM:** Albuquerque-area authors Pati Nagle and M.J. Locke (Laura J. Mixon) will discuss and sign their SF/fantasy novels, *Heart of the Exiled* and *Up Against It*, respectively, at Page One Bookstore.

+ **SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 19-20:** *A John Carpenter Weird Science Weekend* at the Guild Cinema, co-presented by Bubonicon 43. *Starman*, with Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen, screens at 2:00 and 6:00 pm. *They Live*, with Roddy Piper and bug



-eyed alien interlopers, plays at 4:15 and 8:15 pm. As usual, cash only. The Guild Cinema is located on Central Avenue NE in the Nob Hill area.

+ **SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 26-27:** *A David Cronenberg Weird Science Weekend* at the Guild Cinema, co-presented by Bubonicon 43. *The Fly*, with Jeff Goldblum and Geena Davis in the remake of a SF classic, screens at 3:00 and 7:00 pm. *Videodrome*, the director's very odd film with James Woods and Deborah Harry, plays at 5:00 and 9:00 pm. The Guild Cinema is located in the Nob Hill area on Central Avenue NE.

2010 PHILIP K. DICK AWARD NOMINEES

In mid-January, Locus Online reported that the 2010 Philip K. Dick Award nominees have been announced:

Yarn by Jon Armstrong, *Chill* by Elizabeth Bear, *The Reapers Are the Angels* by Alden Bell, *Song of Scarabaeus* by Sara Creasy, *The Strange Affair of Spring Heeled Jack* by Mark Hodder, *Harmony*, *Project Itoh* translated by Alexander O. Smith, and *State of Decay* by James Knapp.

The Awards are presented annually to a distinguished work of science fiction published in paperback original form in the United States.

The winner and any special citations will be announced April 22 at Norwescon 34 in SeaTac WA.

AUTHOR/COLLECTOR PASSES AWAY

Author, bookseller and collector Jerry Weist died January 7, after a long struggle with cancer. He was 61 years old, reports Locus Online.

Weist wrote the Hugo Award-nominated *Ray Bradbury: An Illustrated Life* (2002) and *The 100 Greatest Comic Books* (2004). He was an art expert with an emphasis on comic book, pulp, and science fiction art, and wrote two editions of *The Comic Art Price Guide*, with a third edition completed shortly before his death and forthcoming.

Born September 16, 1949, Weist grew up in Wichita KS. He began producing his own fanzines in 1962 with *Nightmare* and *Movieland Monsters*, and later edited and published E.C. Comics fanzine *Squa Tront* (1967-1983). He moved to New York in 1972 as an artist, with work featured in one-man shows and galleries.

He relocated to Boston, where he opened early comic book store The Million Year Picnic in 1974. After a decade as a bookseller he moved back to New York, where he spent 10 years as a consultant with Sotheby's auction house, organizing their first major comic book and comic art auction in 1991. He is survived by his wife and two children.

BOOK GROUP KEEPS READING

The Droids & Dragons SF Book Group meets at 7:30 pm Monday, February 21 (unless a change is required due to the Presidents' Day holiday), in the DVD/gift area of Page One to discuss *Julian Comstock: A Story of 22nd-Century America* by Robert Charles Wilson (Tor Books 2009), nominated for a Hugo last year. The group then focuses on *Blonde Bombshell* by Tom Holt on March 21.

Meetings of D&D are open to all interested readers on the third Monday of each month. Books for discussion are chosen two months in advance, and group members receive a 20% discount on selected novels. For more information, contact Yvonne at piebald@juno.com or Craig at 266-8905.

BACIGALUPI & PRATCHETT WIN AWARDS

Paolo Bacigalupi's *Ship Breaker* (Little, Brown) won the 2011 Michael L. Printz Award for excellence in young adult literature, announced January 10 at the American Library Association midwinter conference in San Diego.

Terry Pratchett received the Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime contribution in writing for young adults, reports Locus Online.

Also of genre interest: the Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production went to *The True Meaning of Smekday* by Adam Rex, narrated by Bahni Turpin.

OS CARD SUFFERS MILD STROKE

Orson Scott Card had a small stroke on New Year's Day 2011, reports Locus Online. According to Card's official website, he is "now back home, retraining his brain so that the fingers of his left hand strike the keys he's aiming for. He will not be responding to most e-mails because his typing time must be devoted to finishing his fiction."

Card's site says that he will "have a full recovery." His speech is unimpaired, and he still plans to conduct radio and taped interviews, but is not planning any public appearances or travel "for the foreseeable future." Instead he plans to spend the next several months writing at home.



BUBONICON 43 WANTS INPUT, RATES GO UP THIS MONTH

by Craig Chrissinger, con co-chair

We're a month and a half into 2011 now, believe it or not, and the Bubonicon 43 train is warming up! Memberships are \$35 each through Saturday, Feb 12, and then they go up to \$38 Feb 13-May 14. They can be purchased in person at club meetings – or by mailing payment (with the PDF pre-registration form from the website) to "NMSF Conference" at PO Box 37257, Albuquerque, NM 87176.

Bubonicon 43 takes place, of course, August 26-28 (five days after the Reno, NV, Worldcon) at the Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale SE, near I-25 and Gibson. Renovations are complete, so we won't have any of those problems this year! Sleeping rooms are \$99 a night single-double occupancy, \$109 for triple-quad. Reservations are needed by August 15. That's 505-843-7000, extension 135. Remember, all Room Parties must be on the 2nd floor, with the hotel and con-com being informed of such at least four days in advance. You can request the "events" floor, a quiet floor, or state you have no preference.

In addition to special guests Stephen Leigh/S.L. Farrell, Ian Tregillis and artist John Picacio, we're expecting such con regulars as Robert Vardeman, Jane Lindskold, Yvonne Coats, Harry O. Morris, Betsy James, Pati Nagle, Melinda Snodgrass, Walter Jon Williams, S.M. Stirling, Victor Milan, John Jos. Miller, Carrie Vaughn, Scott Phillips, Laura J. Mixon, George RR Martin, Connie Willis, Mario Acevedo, Daniel Abraham, Doranna Durgin, Andy Kuhn, and Susan Krinard, among others. All subject to change and travel plans, of course.

The con-com is working on panel topics right now (panel topics, event ideas and proposals are welcome by next weekend), and sending out invitations to potential participants mid-March. We're asking for all Fan Programming proposals and preliminary requests for time/space to be submitted by April 15 (Tax Day) so we have time for any questions or clarifications before we build the tentative schedule.

Some planned programming includes the Green Slime Awards, the mass autographing session, the usual two auctions, a filking session, a game show, the costume contest, films and probably videos, and more fan/video programming. Plus, hopefully, the return of the Kids programming two-hour block (Jessica can use volunteer assistants).

Pati Nagle should be spearheading the Authors Sunday Afternoon Tea, but it's not confirmed as of yet. Most likely, she would be assisted by Jane Lindskold and Joan Saberhagen. And Victor Milan probably will

be, once again, the Master of Ceremonies for the Costume Contest on Saturday.

The theme for Bubonicon 43 has not been set yet, but most likely will be “Steampunk.” In keeping with tradition and to honor the memory of NM’s own Pioneer Author, we plan to make a financial donation to the (Jack) Williamson SF Library Collection at Eastern NM University, and also to the local Roadrunner Food Bank. A third non-profit organization also might be benefited, but that vote has not taken place as of this newsletter’s deadline.

Dealers’ tables are \$85 with one membership, and \$120 with two. Since we only have 23 tables total, there is a maximum of two tables per dealer. Also, tables are not considered sold until payment is received and a contract is signed. For more Dealer info, please email Caci Gallop at bubonicon@gmail.com. A countdown of tables remaining is posted on the website.

Meanwhile, Roslee Orndorff and Meg Malins are gearing up for the 2011 Art Show. As usual, art show packets will be available online mid-May. We don’t plan to mail out packets, but if you don’t have internet access we can take care of you. If that’s the case, please send a 63-cent #10 SASE to the PO Box. Info is available from Roslee at BubonicRose@hotmail.com.

More general information is available from Kristen at 459-8734, Craig at 266-8905, the PO Box, Mike McCommas’ maintained website: www.bubonicon.com, via email at bubonicon@gmail.com.

LET’S TRY A COMIC EVENT AGAIN

The Albuquerque Comic Expo (ACE) takes place June 24-26, 2011, at the Albuq Convention Center downtown. Coordinator Greg Derrick plans to have room for 6,000 attendees with many more comic-oriented guests than last month’s ABQ Comic Con (plus printing many more program books and schedules). A relationship between Bubonicon and ACE also has been established with links to each other’s websites and a planned exchange of program book advertisements.

Guests announced so far include *Trek*’s Marina Sirtis, artist Gene Ha, Peter Mayhew and Dave Prowse from the *Star Wars* films, Ernie Hudson (of *Ghostbusters*), *Battlestar*’s Richard Hatch, local filmmakers Scott Phillips and Kurlly Tlapoyawa, Jim Kelly, Doug Jones, Ben Templesmith (comics guest of honor), local artists Andy Kuhn and Aaron Campbell, James O’Barr, Joe Jusko and others. Derrick also is talking to the New Mexico *Wild Cards* authors and local low-budget filmmakers.

As such, the annual Tromadance New Mexico Film Festival, organized by Burning Paradise’s Tlapoyawa, will take place at ACE. A Costume Contest also has been announced.

Their website notes: “ACE, or the Albuquerque Comic Expo, is Albuquerque’s newest and most exciting comic book, pop culture, and entertainment convention. It’s a weekend-long celebration of the very best in comic books, movies, television, gaming, and more! The event will be ticketed. Tickets will be available for the entire weekend, or for individual days. All attendees ages 10 and up are required to have a ticket to enter the event. Children 10 and under are free with a paid adult ticket. If you are exhibiting, sponsoring, or in Artist Alley, tickets will be provided with your package, and extra tickets will be available at a discounted rate. Military, police, and firefighters will receive an additional discount.”

The show floor will be open 10 am-9 pm Friday, 10 am-9 pm Saturday, and 10 am-6 pm Sunday of the event. A full three-day ticket is \$40.00 through March 31, \$50.00 April 1-June 23, and \$55.00 at the door. Dailies at the Door are \$30.00 Friday or Saturday, and \$25.00 Sunday. Info at <http://abqcomicexpo.com>. You also can write to the ACE folks at: Albuquerque Comic Expo, PO Box 27504, Albuquerque, NM 87125-7504.

BOOK REVIEW ROUND-UP

The Warlord’s Legacy by Ari Marmell, Bantam Spectra 2011, hc \$26.00, 364 pages. Review by Joe Walters

This is the second book in what is apparently going to be an ongoing series, the first book being *The Conqueror’s Shadow*. Not having read the first book, I was gratified to find that it was not necessary to have done so before reading this one. Everything you need to know is covered nicely in narrative, and I never found myself lost due to missing information from Book One. And little of that first book is spoiled here, beyond learning that there was a Very Bad Menace in that book, and the central character of the series – one Corvis Rebaine – put the thump on him, and only Rebaine made it to the second book.

The story took a little while to grab me, but once it did it held on tight. This was largely because the book contains quite a large cast, many characters to meet and become accustomed to before the reader can understand who is seeking what. It doesn’t help that at least two of the characters use multiple names at different times...

The focal character, Corvis Rebaine, had been a powerful warlord, a terror among terrors, who—with the help of extremely powerful magical augmentation—conquered, slaughtered, and spread mayhem with great abandon in his past. Responsible for the deaths of many thousands, he was known as “the Terror of the East,” an appellation that implies that “hero” just might not be a proper term for him. As the book opens, Rebaine has abandoned the old ways and is living a simpler life under a different name, trying not to be recognized and subsequently killed. *Everyone* hates Rebaine, and believes him to have vanished forever.

Suddenly, an unknown impostor appears and begins slaughtering members of the ruling aristocracy and others in power, using Rebaine’s old appearance and methods, right

down to the exact same exact powerful magic. Naturally, it is assumed that it *is* Rebaine behind this, and surviving leaders start preparing to hunt him down.

The story then follows two small groups, each hunting the other; Rebaine himself is leading one group, having been brought out of retirement by the reports of the impostor (it's kind of obvious this was the impostor's purpose), and the other group is seeking Rebaine; the members of that group each have different reasons for seeking him. The climax of the book comes when the two groups inevitably meet.

Pacing is excellent, and I never found myself tempted to skim over dull sections. Character motivations are often subtle, and there are plans within plans throughout, and surprising revelations here and there.

There are a few flashback scenes, which are jarring—other than that they're set in a different typeface, there's nothing to indicate they're flashbacks. You have to figure that out yourself.

Ari Marmell does make use of one of my pet peeves: we are bombarded with many fictional place-names without even the vaguest *clue* as to how to pronounce them, and most of these names have two or even three possible pronunciations. A guide would have been a big help here. The characters are not at all helpful here, as they all speak contemporary 21st-century English, albeit with some fantasy-standard curses thrown in here and there.

Nonetheless, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Go read it! Meanwhile, I'll be out looking for Book One.

***Leviathans of Jupiter* by Ben Bova, Tor 2011, hc \$24.99, 480 pages.**

Review by Grant Kuck

At last, a book designed to be read in the bath tub! (Either that or in a tank of perfluorocarbon.) But I am getting ahead of myself. Ben Bova's latest book, *Leviathans of Jupiter*, reminds me of the *Wizard of Oz* with beautiful, microbiologist Deidre Ambrose in the place of Dorothy; and a tin-man-like cyborg named Dorn, who, while not searching for a heart, is searching for peace and forgiveness. Then there is Andy Corvus, a tall-but-thin scarecrow of a scientist who studies the brain (with the hope of making alien contact); and finally engineer G. Maxwell Yeager, who has the biggest ego in the group and manages to take the lion's share of any conversation. Katherine Westfall, one of the wealthiest women on earth, fills in the villain's role with plots and schemes that would make even the wicked witch jealous.

The one thing all these characters have in common is the Thomas Gold Station that orbits Jupiter, the largest of all the solar systems planets. Gold Station's quest (aside from studying the planet itself) is to make contact with alien creatures colloquially, called "Leviathans" who are each about the size of the city of Manhattan. They dwell in an ocean almost 11 times wider than Earth and five thousand kilometers deep. To make contact a special submersible, named Faraday, has been designed by Max Yeager to safely carry humans deep down into the ocean and back.

If there is a wizard in this story, it's Grant Archer, physicist and head of the Gold Station scientific team. In Bova's book, *Jupiter*, a Leviathan saved the doomed submersible he was in. The act convinced Archer that the giant aliens were intelligent but he still wants scientific proof.

Then, as if hostile environments and ocean crushing pressures aren't enough, there also is Katherine Westfall who is determined to see the whole thing fail. Should it succeed, Archer could be appointed director of the International Astronautical Authority – a position Westfall wants. She isn't above a blackmail, sabotage, and even murder to get there.

And as for the flying monkeys – may I have the envelope please – the winners are aliens called "sharks." Okay, so it's a bit of a stretch but in my defense these aliens do sort of fly through the highly acidic ocean laced with ammonia and sulfur. They also attack Leviathans and little submersibles like the Faraday. Even though our wicked witch Westfall isn't in contact with them, they still are doing her will.

Leviathans of Jupiter does have a few weak moments but I'm not going to nitpick on the frame when the painting itself is so good. It is a novel that stands well on its own even if you haven't previously read *Jupiter*. It is a wonderful book to be read in a bath tub of nice, warm water. If only I could find a store that would sell me rubber Leviathans instead of duckies, the experience would be perfect. As for reading it in a tank of perfluorocarbon, I'm afraid you'll have to read the book to understand that comment.

***Vicious Grace: Black Sun's Daughter Book 3* by M.L.N Hanover, Pocket 2010, mmpb \$7.99, 384 pages.**

Review by Caci Gallop

Vicious Grace, the third in the *Black Sun's Daughter* urban fantasy series by M.L.N. Hanover, continues the supernatural romp of Jayné Heller, but with a bit of a twist.

Now I understand that some people like to read the last line or two of a book to determine whether they want to read the whole book to find out how the story got there. It's absolutely imperative that you do not do this with *Vicious Grace*. The last line of the book is a huge bombshell and drops you, the reader, off the deep end while setting up the next book in the series. Personally, I feel if you have read the last line before reading the preceding story in this case it will color the way you read this story prematurely.

Vicious Grace opens up with Jayné and her team training in a remote area of the United States attempting to shape themselves into better fighters, but of course duty calls. They hear of an unusual situation in Chicago and immediately travel to the area to take care of the problem. What you do not expect in this book, unlike the others, is that the characters' true colors begin to show. There is a major upset when the team learns what kind of man Jayné's uncle really was and who they really are in the face of that revelation. The emotions of the main characters are what really make this book interesting to read. Finding and fighting what they came to Chicago for was almost like a secondary plot compared to the way the group is interacting and dealing with each other.

All and all, *Vicious Grace* is another entertaining and interesting read of the *Black Sun's Daughter* series, and it's highly recommended if you enjoyed the first two books.

***Bloodshot* by Cherie Priest, Bantam Spectra 2011, tp \$15.00, 361 pages.**

Review by Craig W. Chrissinger

From *Boneshaker's* steampunk zombies in the Old Northwest, Cherie Priest now turns her attention to urban fantasy in *Bloodshot*, a stand-alone novel that obviously

serves as the start of a series. What's more unique here than the average run-of-the-mill urban fantasy is having a sassy, thieving vampire as the first-person protagonist.

Raylene Pendle lives mostly in Seattle and has no real attachment to any of the major vampire houses. She prefers it that way, and makes her living as a world-renowned thief who uses her supernatural (and planning) skills to obtain priceless art and rare jewels. She doesn't usually work with other vampires, but then she's contacted by the mysterious blind vampire Ian. Seems he was kidnapped and held by Project Bloodshot, a biological experiment to understand vampire skills, such as eyesight and hearing, and use them for military applications. Ian wants Raylene to steal the paperwork that explains what was done to him so a doctor in Canada can try to repair the damage to his eyes.

When a ninja-dressed intruder breaks into the old factory warehouse where Raylene holds her stolen goods, she quickly becomes immersed in a world of intrigue, spies and Men in Black. With a CIA-financed scientist trying to track her and an ass-kicking drag queen from Atlanta beside her, this case proves to be more difficult and personal than anything Raylene has faced before.

Bloodshot is a quick, fun and quirky read. Raylene is well established by Priest, and given a memorable personality. Just like with *Boneshaker*, this Seattle author puts together many enjoyable elements and characters. A sassy vampire, a former Navy Seal who hides as a drag queen, agents who dress in covert black, and plenty of action – what else do you need? A sequel would be gladly welcomed.

***Blameless: The Parasol Protectorate 3* by Gail Carriger, Orbit 2010, mmpb \$7.99, 374 pages.**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Gail Carriger's *The Parasol Protectorate* is a series of novels that follow the adventures of Alexia Tarabotti, an unconventional woman living in a steampunk-influenced 19th century London. Carriger's alternate reality examines a land where vampires and werewolves have risen to become important members of society, and where steam-powered technology has taken the place of electricity.

Blameless, the third book, finds Alexia in the midst of a major crisis. Her husband has thrown her out of their home, and she has been forced to move in with her silly mother and two annoying sisters. Her social standing is ruined because of the scandal, and she is the main focus of London Society gossip. In order to escape, Alexia decides to go on a tour of France and Italy. She is accompanied by her friend Madame Genevieve Lefoux, a well-known inventor, and her trusted manservant, Floote. During their travels, the group is mysteriously attacked by vampires that seem intent on killing Alexia, and they are forced to take cover with the Templars, an organization of Vampire and Werewolf hunters that operate under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church.

This is a very enjoyable installment in what is shaping up to be an excellent series of books. If you enjoy Jane Austen-style books with a decidedly supernatural twist, then I would recommend Carriger's work. However, the plot of *Blameless* depends a lot on the reader knowing what has happened in previous installments. I would suggest starting at the beginning with *Soulless* if this series sounds appealing.

***The Native Star* by M.K. Hobson, Bantam Spectra 2010, mmpb \$7.99, 400 pages.**

Review by Serge Mailloux

A few years ago, I discovered a story. And a writer. The story was "The Hotel Astarte," and the writer was M.K. Hobson. She went on to write one wonderful story after another. Last August, she gave us her novel, *The Native Star*.

The year is 1876. The place is the logging town of Lost Pine, up in northern California's Sierras. Things are not going well for Emily Edwards. It's becoming more and more difficult for her to get enough business to support her aging Pap when everybody prefers buying magical charms from catalogs that now come all the way from the East. Out of desperation, she uses herbs and poetry to put together a love spell that'll make Dag, the town's most wealthy man, want to marry her. Things immediately go wrong – a situation not helped by the local mine's zombie crew going out of control.

When the dust has settled, Emily is stuck with a mysterious gem thru the middle of her palm. Unable to remove the stone, and unable to cancel the spell that has made Dag obsessed with her, she'll have to ride all the way to San Francisco with Dreadnought Stanton, a warlock from an East Coast institute who has a very low opinion of her approach to Magic. Their journey is filled with tension:

"The zombies were animated entirely by magic."

Stanton chewed on a thick piece of bread, which he'd buttered and topped with even more sugar. "The stone absorbed the magical energy that drove them. But it seems not to affect magic that has already worked its way into a living creature's life force."

"That's a shame," Emily said.

"Not really. If the stone worked like that, you'd most likely be dead."

"Instead of on a road to San Francisco, trying to rescue a man who loves me so much he hates me?"

Stanton looked as he tore another hunk from the now-ravaged loaf. "Still feeling guilty, are we? I'd have thought you'd be over that by now."

"I have a nettlesome little thing called a conscience," Emily hissed. "Ever hear of it?"

The situation is bad enough, but there are also dark forces at work, humans in the government who have no qualms about wielding the Magic of blood. They want Emily's stone, even if it means having to hack her hand off.

Highly recommended.

***Insatiable* by Meg Cabot, William Morrow 2010, hc \$22.99, 464 pages (paperback release June 2011).**

Review by Jessica Coyle

Meg Cabot's latest novel, *Insatiable*, follows the adventures of Meena Harper, a writer for TV's second-highest-rated soap opera *Insatiable*. Meena possesses the ability of seeing how people are going to die, which is both a blessing and a curse. One day she meets a man on the street who saves her from a colony of bats that mysteriously attack her.

The man turns out to be her neighbor's cousin Lucien, and he is the first man Meena has met whose death she cannot predict. Meena falls madly in love with Lucien, but their romance quickly sucks her into a strange underground world of vampires and vampire hunters that she never knew existed.

Cabot, mostly known for writing the *Princess Diaries* series of Young Adult novels, has written several other books that incorporate the supernatural, including *The Mediator* and *1-800-Where-R-You* series. *Insatiable* is her first paranormal romance directed at an adult audience, and it is a fun ride. Meena's trials and tribulations, even at their most serious, are approached with refreshing humor. Especially amusing is the novel's secondary storyline in which Meena tries to convince the staff of *Insatiable* not to adopt a vampire storyline to beat out their competition in the ratings. If you enjoy your paranormal romance with a sense of humor, *Insatiable* is a good book to check out.

Midnight Riot by Ben Aaronovitch, Del Rey 2011, mmpb \$7.99, 320 pages. **Review by Caci Gallop**

Midnight Riot is the first in a new series from the fairly well-known screenwriter and short story author Ben Aaronovitch. This new book very easily slips right into the genre Aaronovitch has established his writing in and is enjoyable to boot.

Midnight Riot starts out with a police constable, Peter Grant, and his unfortunate, unexpected, meeting with a ghost. This leads him into a previously unknown, largely ignored, section of the Metropolitan Police Force under the direction of a mysterious Inspector who reports to the Commissioner and no one else. Peter is quickly taken under Inspector Nightingale's wing and without much preamble begins learning magic and solving crimes in the greater London area. While trying to keep his head above water after being tossed into this world filled with magic, water nymphs and Father Thames himself, they chase down a mysterious rash of murders where the victims' faces generally just fall off.

A quick, amusing read, and easily believable as though magic really might exist in modern London with a special branch of the police force dealing with the odd and unexplained crimes. Recommended if you enjoy crime-dramas with a bit of supernatural thrown in for flavor.

Noise by Darin Bradley, Bantam Spectra 2010, tp \$15.00, 240 pages. **Review by Amy Mathis**

The short novel *Noise* is set in the very near future, after the transition from analog to digital TV in the US. An underground hacker subculture has developed around "Salvage," the old analog system, communicating outside the mainstream media. Salvage's users get an early warning about the upcoming, sudden collapse of the American economy, government and social structure, long before everyone else. The book centers around two Texan college students, Hiram and Levi, who start preparing for survival in this shattered new world. They compose a manual, "The Book," which isn't just a survival kit but a sociological and political framework for a new way of living. It does presume a violent, anarchistic, zero-sum new world where one can only trust oneself and one's small group, where anyone outside your group is an enemy whom you may have to kill before they have a chance to kill you.

The Book's opening doesn't pull any punches: "This Book assumes many things...that you are still alive...that there has been a breakdown...that a new competition for resources has begun...that you will kill other people..." Hiram and Levi start enlisting friends to form their own group and

go on an arduous journey to a rural place, Amaranth, where they hope to live in relative security and plenty. Needless to say they don't do this very peacefully or politely. At the same time, The Book opposes an anything-goes mentality. There are plenty of rules about how to select leaders, how to initiate new members, etc. It doesn't prescribe violence just for the sake of violence.

I admit that when I first read this book I was totally disgusted. The post-apocalyptic genre isn't my favorite to begin with, except for oldies like *1984* and *Brave New World*. Also, when reading fiction or nonfiction about survival in extreme conditions, I have a lot of trouble putting myself in the shoes of people who have to make terrible decisions about life and death. I tend to get on my high horse and think, "Well, I'd never stoop to acting like some blood-thirsty monster, no matter what." But that's easy for me to say when I've had quite a safe and secure life.

I reread Darin Bradley's book a few days ago and what struck me was that *Noise* is about idealistic nerds who suddenly have to deal with a harsh new reality. Hiram and Levi grew up in a sheltered environment of church, Boy Scouts, Dungeons and Dragons, Renaissance Faires and Greek mythology. They had to quickly learn how to shoot guns and organize a group of guerrilla fighters. They weren't accustomed to violence and aggression.

Overall *Noise* was quite a downer, a reminder that even the greatest civilizations can collapse. As flawed as The Book's philosophy seems, maybe it's good to have a Plan B.

The Lost Fleet 6: Victorious by Jack Campbell, Ace 2010, mmpb \$7.99, 352 pages. **Review by Serge Mailloux**

Last year I read *The Lost Fleet: Victorious* by Jack Campbell, aka John G Hemry. And read it fast I did – probably the fastest I've ever read a novel. In the series' first volume, *Black*, Jack Geary had been drifting in space in suspended animation for one century until the Alliance Fleet found him in enemy territory. Since then he's had to pull out one miracle after another to bring the Fleet home. And in this sixth and final novel, he finally has. His home is gone, he is tired, but much remains to be taken care of. Not only must he take the Fleet back to the enemy's human home world, but there is also the matter of the aliens who may have started the war:

Another hour went by, Geary's thoughts dwelling on the battles he had commanded, on the men and women and ships who had survived and on those who hadn't. His decisions, his responsibility. He remembered the Marine officer Carabali's words. I am tired of deciding who lives and who dies.
Recommended.

ASFS MEETING REPORT — DECEMBER 2010: SHORT FILMS & DESSERTS

Forty-one people came out to watch comedic holiday film shorts, and to help judge the 6th ASFS Dessert Cook-Off by tasting many delightful food samples.

Space was very tight in the Bernalillo, but we managed to show RiffTrax's *Cooking Terms and What They*

Mean, two episodes of *Look Around You*, *Futurama*'s "X-Mas Story," the Muppets' "Carol of the Bells" and "Ode to Joy," a Chuck short - "John Casey Presents: So You Want To Be a Deadly Spy," Craig Ferguson's unbroadcast *Doctor Who* Opening, RiffTrax's *The Night Before Christmas*, and the *Madagascar* Penguins in "A Christmas Caper."

In the Dessert Cook-Off, there were an incredible number of entrees from Becky Davis, Michelle Foley, Roberta Johnson, Randi Tinkham, Patricia Rogers, Christie Jury, Julie Heffernan, Harriet Engle, Tom Sittler, Joe Lane, Danielle Pollock, Caci Gallop, Joe & Linda Walters, Kathy K. Kubica, J. Kriss White, Pat Mathews, Aaron Birenboim, Jessica Coyle and Amy Mathis.

Best Overall went to Christie Jury's Ginger Cheesecake with Ginger Peach Topping, and Second Place to Becky Davis' Pumpkin Gingersnap Ice Cream. In the Ginger Category, Danielle Pollock won for her Ginger Walnut Rumballs. And an Honorable Mention went to Joe Lane's Chocolate Covered Ginger Chinese Spiced Bacon.

Thanks to everyone for their holiday contributions!

JANUARY 2011: CLUB & BOOK DISCUSSIONS

We returned to the Vista Norte Room (for the first time in a while) to seat 39 people around the permanent conference table to talk about the club's future location (come March) and what books members had read in 2010.

CLUB BUSINESS: After much discussion of researched potential alternate meeting locations (because the Sheraton's rates have gone up), points of confusion and contention, and some voiced frustrations, a motion was made and passed by a simple majority of those present —

"The club will stay at the Sheraton Airport Hotel for the present, with dues going up 50 cents a meeting or \$5.00 annually unless another source of revenue is found. Such alternate revenue must be determined by March, or dues will go up effective April 2011."

The Sheraton will try to keep us in a larger room on the ground floor since our attendance has been averaging

38.5 people in the last year, but they cannot guarantee that will be possible every month. A signed contract will hold the rental rate to \$65.00 through March 2012.

Book Discussion: Books read in 2010 and recommended by folks include *Boneshaker* by Priest, *The Name of the Wind* by Rothfuss, *Bitter Seeds* by Tregillis, *Anathem* and *Cryptonomicon* by Stephenson, the *Long Sun* books by Wolfe, *Illusion* by Volsky, *Turncoat* by Butcher, *The Edge of Reason* and *The Edge of Ruin* by Snodgrass, *Dracula* by Stoker, *Mutants: On Genetic Variety* by Leroi, *Wildside* by Gould, *Dick and Jane and Vampires* by Marchesani, *Unfinished Tales* by Tolkien, books by L. Sprague de Camp, *The High King of Montival* and *A Taint in the Blood* by Stirling, *The Native Star* by Hobson, *Twelfth Planet* by Sitchin, *Diana Comet* by McDonald, *The Terror* by Simmons, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* by Grahame-Smith, *Night of the Living Trekkies* by Anderson, *Wired for War* by Singer, *Against All Things Ending* by Donaldson, *I Shall Wear Midnight* by Pratchett, Thomas E. Sniegowski books, *Secrets of the Lost Symbol* by Burstein, *Blackout* and *All Clear* by Willis, *Vicious Grace* by Hanover, *Indigo Springs* by Dellamonica, *Fart Proudly* by Franklin, *Insatiable* by Cabot, *Girl Genius* by Foglio, *The Lost City of Z* by Grann, *Last Call* by Powers, the *Tattoo Shop Mysteries* by Olson, and *Little Brother* by Doctorow.

Books to Avoid (Warning): *The Windup Girl* by Bacigalupi (beautifully written but very long & depressing), *Trolls in the Hamptons* by Jerome (not that good) and *The City & the City* by Mieville...

EDITOR NOTES TO FILL THIS SPACE

What is what up with the freezing cold this February? We're breaking records in New Mexico set 40 years ago in 1971. Global warming seems like a fantasy at the moment. More like another Ice Age! Thank Ghu it will warm up this weekend.

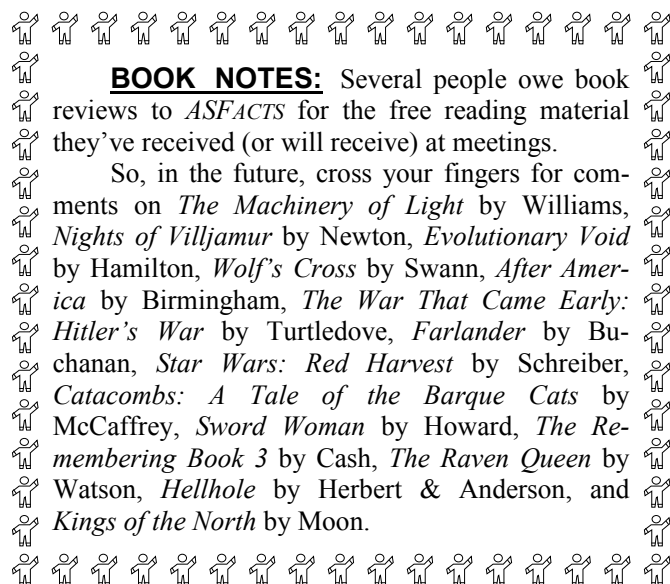
February also marks a year since I got this particular computer with Office 2007, and my one-year anniversary at Page One Bookstore. Been a fast 12 months, really.

Just did Jessica and my birthdays in the last two months, had my annual physical check-up this morning, wrote a short piece for *Fangoria* last Friday, and have seen advance screenings of *The Adjustment Bureau*, *I Am Number Four* and *The Green Hornet*. Next up, we're going to the Southwest Burlesque Showcase tomorrow, there are several signings at Page One and Bubonicon-sponsored screenings at the Guild coming up, and we're planning on being in Portales at the end of March for the annual Williamson Lectureship! Busy, busy, busy.

Thanks to Joe Walters, Grant Kuck, Caci Gallop, Jessica Coyle, Serge Mailloux and Amy Mathis for their book reviews this time. Hopefully, more material will come for the April issue - I need stuff by **Sun, April 3**.

See you all in these pages in two months. Happy Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day. Beware the Ides of March and such.

—Craig C.

 **BOOK NOTES:** Several people owe book reviews to *ASFACTS* for the free reading material they've received (or will receive) at meetings.

So, in the future, cross your fingers for comments on *The Machinery of Light* by Williams, *Nights of Villjamur* by Newton, *Evolutionary Void* by Hamilton, *Wolf's Cross* by Swann, *After America* by Birmingham, *The War That Came Early: Hitler's War* by Turtledove, *Farlander* by Buchanan, *Star Wars: Red Harvest* by Schreiber, *Catacombs: A Tale of the Barque Cats* by McCaffrey, *Sword Woman* by Howard, *The Remembering Book 3* by Cash, *The Raven Queen* by Watson, *Hellhole* by Herbert & Anderson, and *Kings of the North* by Moon.