

EMERALD CITY

Issue 54

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An occasional 'zine produced by Cheryl Morgan and available from her at cmorgan@ceres.wallis.com or on line at <http://www.emcit.com>

Introduction

This issue contains my desperate attempts to catch up on the US-published books before going back to the UK, especially as much of it is potential Hugo material. So, lots of reviews, very little about me. That's probably the way it should be.

I have, however, been busy with other things as well. As mentioned an issue or two ago, I've got some new web design software and I have been undertaking a radical revamp of the web site. I was hoping to have it ready for this issue, but it isn't quite there yet. It should certainly be finished by the end of March, but there's a good chance it will be there in a week or two if you fancy checking in to see.

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Baggins of Fun

OK folks, this one is a real no-brainer. If a book is titled "There and Back Again", what well known fantasy story must it be based on?

The person who asked for multiple choice options can go to the back of the class.

The new novel from Pat Murphy is, of course, based on *The Hobbit*. It is, in fact, *The Hobbit in Space*. Our hero, ~~Bilbo~~ Bailey is a homely ~~hobbit~~ norbit who lives in the Asteroid Belt, is overly fond of eating, and is not at all keen on Adventures. He particularly dislikes planets because you can't see the stars during the day and there are awful things called clouds that might drop water on your head without so much as a by-your-leave. Unfortunately he has this friend called ~~Gandalf~~ Gitana who wants him to take up with a bunch of arrogant, quarrelsome ~~Dwarves~~ Clones and rush off in search of Treasure.

As a pastiche, *There and Back Again* is very good. It is a long time since I last read *The Hobbit*, but as I read through Murphy's story I was continually reminded of elements of Tolkien's original that had slipped into the dusty corners of my mind. And yet the setting is completely

different. A lot of work has gone into producing an SF version of the story that is both instantly recognisable and consistent in itself. But the question we have to ask is, Why?

The answer, I suspect, lies in the fact that Pat's day job is as a writer for the San Francisco Exploratorium, a science museum that specialises in enthusing kids with a love of experiment and discovery. *There and Back Again* is full of interesting scientific ideas, well explained, in a story that is both readable and captivating for children. It is a bold and laudable experiment, and I think it works very well.

There is one small fly in the ointment, which is that Pat has not been able to resist playing with society as well as science. The book contains mention of, for example, psychotropic drugs, non-traditional family arrangements, and a matriarchal version of Islam. In terms of subversion, this is to Harry Potter as a Black Mass is to a Halloween pumpkin. There's plenty in there for the average WASP mother to want the book ritually burned, and Ms. Murphy along with it. Fortunately, Pat is nowhere near as famous or successful as J.K. Rowling and as is the way of these media-fuelled panics her book probably won't get noticed. If it does, of course, Pat will soon be famous and successful, which will be a Good Thing, so I'm not too worried about it.

So, if you have kids, you want them to enjoy reading, and you want them to learn a lot about how the universe works, and maybe pick up a few sane ideas about how to run a society at the same time, this is the book for you. And if you just want a fun read that is heavy on the nostalgia for a childhood mis-spent reading Tolkien, well the book fills that role too. Nice one Pat, thank you.

There and Back Again - Pat Murphy - Tor - hardcover

The Ultimate Spoof

Those of you who have already seen *Galaxy Quest* are probably rolling on the floor in hysterics at the mere mention of the film's name. For those of you who have not, don't worry, none of this is going to give away anything important in the plot.

Once upon a time there was a highly successful TV series called ~~Star Trek~~ *Galaxy Quest*. It was cheap and tacky, the acting was poor and the plots predictable, but it had a wonderful, up-beat message of hope and it generated a massive fan following. Years later, the stars of the show are still making appearances at fan conventions. Indeed, it is probably their only source of income.

Meanwhile, in a galaxy far, far away, a naïve and innocent alien race has been monitoring broadcasts from Earth. The aliens have no concept of deceit or pretence, and are particularly taken by the news reports of the brave Captain ~~Kirk~~ Taggart and his crew. They decide to travel to Earth and seek the aid of these brave adventurers. Who else can save them from the evil warlord who is attacking their world? They build a working replica of The Protector, Taggart's ship, based on what they have seen of it in the ~~historical records~~ TV series. All it needs now is the brave and resourceful crew. As it happens, said crew is currently appearing at GalaxyCon 18, where the long-suffering actors can be found in costume signing autographs for their adoring fans.

Dear readers, *Galaxy Quest* is not just a spoof of *Star Trek*, it is a spoof of the whole phenomenon, including the devoted fannish entourage that the series has developed. Whoever wrote the film has been to a few science fiction conventions and has understood the genre and fandom perfectly. By the end of the film Kevin and I could barely stand

for laughing. I don't think it could have been done any better.

Nor is the film a shallow piss-take. The movie both faithfully reproduces the upbeat, positivist morality of the original *Star Trek* and uses that notion to help its characters, the actors, grow and mature. There is more character development in this film than there is in the entire run of *Next Gen*.

It helps, of course, if you have an excellent cast. I'm not a big fan of Tim Allen, but he does an excellent imitation of William Shatner. The poses, the attitudes and the acrobatic rolls in the dust are all faithfully copied from *Trek*. But the star of the show, by a mile, is Sigourney Weaver, who does a wonderful job of playing a third-rate actress with big boobs whose sole role on the ship is to flash her cleavage and repeat everything that the ship's computer says. There's a hilarious interview with her on Amazon where she relates how the director asked her to say a line whilst moving about the set. Sigourney, in full method-acting mind-set as actress Gwen De Marco, complains that she can't say lines whilst concentrating on her walk.

I could go on, but I don't want to give any of the gags away. Suffice it to say that it is a wonderful movie with a lot more to it than you might expect on just seeing a synopsis. If you have ever watched *Star Trek*, or been to an SF convention, you will love it, guaranteed. (Um, unless of course you are one of those sad people who believes that *Star Trek* is All True.)

I also confidently predict that in a year's time there will have been at least one actual *Galaxy Quest* convention and probably an animated TV series based on the fictional series in the film. Expect lots of *Galaxy Quest* costumes at this year's conventions. Heck, I'm working on my Lt. Tawny Madison outfit now. Anyone

got a spare blonde wig? Must have dark roots...

Visions of Things to Come?

There were a lot of books I was expecting to pick up whilst I was in California. This wasn't one of them, but I happened to walk into one of my local bookshops and found a new SF hardback prominently displayed. The back cover included rave reviews from Mary Doria Russell, Elizabeth Hand, Maureen McHugh and Nalo Hopkinson. How, I wondered, had I not heard of this writer before, especially as this was her third novel? I must do better in future. The hardback in question was *The Annunciate*, by Severna Park. It will be featured next issue. In the meantime, here is a review of her second novel, *Hand of Prophecy*.

I'm not entirely sure what to make of this one. Park writes very well, and I can quite see why people have compared the setting to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (and you can't get much higher praise than that!). The story concerns two far future societies, The Emirate and The Faraque, who are at war. The heroine, Frenna, is one of the Favoured Ones, a race of people genetically engineered by the Faraque to be perfect slaves. As a result of a previous war, Frenna is currently a slave on an Emirate border planet and has never met any of the Faraque, but she is soon to encounter some of her race's former masters.

And that basically is it. Of course she wins her freedom in the end. There are not a lot of surprises in the book. I think that in some way it is supposed to be an allegory of the female condition, arguing that we are conditioned by sex and tradition to be slaves. But if it is then the SF element thoroughly confuses the issue. If Frenna is genetically engineered to be a slave, then she must obtain her freedom

through a fault in that process, not through the will to break free of cultural conditioning. As politics, the book just doesn't work.

There are a couple of other flaws too. I really don't think it is a good idea for an author to set much of a book in and around sport (well, gladiatorial combat) if she has complete contempt for sportsmen and their fans. Also Ms. Park knows nothing about how to set up a betting scam. I worked in a bookmaker's during my college vacations and I can assure you that what her characters do has no chance of working.

But, as I said, it is a well-written book that suggests that the author has the capacity to do a lot better. Despite the cover blurb, it doesn't say a lot about gender, although it does contain some seriously hot lesbian sex, something that Park clearly has much more interest in than sport. As I said at the start, I have *The Annunciate* still to read. I have high expectations.

Hand of Prophecy - Severna Park - Avon - softcover

Swapping Bodies, Swapping Cultures

Many of you will have had the pleasure of meeting Stephen Dedman at Aussiecon Three. Not that he doesn't travel - I first met him in Glasgow at the 1995 Worldcon - but as one of the foremost young Australian writers he will have been a bit more visible on his home turf.

That is, if he considers that he has home turf. As I said, he does travel. Indeed, he does so a lot. He does it very capably on the cheap. So the fact that the hero of his new novel is an Australian who has done a lot of travelling and now puts his experience to good use running a travel agency in San Francisco is probably significant.

Not that we actually see much of Mike Galloway. For most of *Foreign Bodies* he is trapped inside the physical presence of a young Asian girl. Given that the novel is about the take-over of San Francisco by a bunch of neo-Fascist, racist lunatics, this is not exactly convenient. Galloway gets that way because a time traveller from the future who has sent his mind back to try to prevent the rise of the Aryan Nation ended up in the girl by mistake and decided that Galloway's body was a preferable alternative. Confused? Don't worry, you won't be.

Of course the irony is that here is a book about body swapping which is set in America but written by an Australian. The first question all my friends in the Bay Area want to ask is, "does he know what he is talking about?" Once again, I think you can rest easy. Stephen seems to know rather more about San Francisco than I do. (Remember that Kevin and I live some 30 miles south of the city in Silicon Valley.) I suspect that much of the material about living rough in The City comes from personal experience. Well, from back-packing around the US anyway. Stephen's previous book, *The Art of Arrow Cutting*, displayed an intimate knowledge of Greyhound buses for similar reasons.

The local colour is good too. Anyone can get their geography right from maps. Although, as I noted, William Gibson seems to have written *All Tomorrow's Parties* from experiences that are a few years old and things do change. However, you can only toss in casual references to Rush Limbaugh or the Folsom Street Fair if you have actually spent a bit of time in San Francisco and have drunk in the ambience of the place. Galloway says that San Francisco is his favourite city in the whole world, and this just might be the author speaking.

On the subject of local knowledge, the book also relies heavily on Stephen's

knowledge of SF. I suspect that some readers may be offended at the idea that Aryan Nation nutters can be found at science fiction conventions, but they are there if you know where to look. And yes, they are all rabid Heinlein fans.

The SF aspect of the book, however, is something of a side feature. Really the novel is a thriller with some SF elements tacked on as useful plot devices. The body-swapping thing is not the focus of the book. Stephen does try to sort out Galloway's feelings about having a female body, but this is one area that I'm fairly sure the author has no actual experience of and he is careful not to let it get in the way of the action. Conveniently his new body turns out to be rather good at martial arts. It also provides an excuse for some more hot lesbian sex. Reading this book immediately after *Hand of Prophecy* was an interesting experience for me.

To sum up, then, an entertaining, fast-paced San Francisco thriller with far more local colour than we have any right to expect of someone whose normal abode is the splendid isolation of Perth, Australia. There's not a lot of philosophy to it, though for those of us who like to call San Francisco home the politics are very sound. It didn't quite make my Hugo shortlist, but it was very enjoyable and I'm already looking forward to Stephen's next book. I think you should too.

Foreign Bodies - Stephen Dedman - Tor - hardcover

Peace at Last?

When *Forever Peace* was issued, Joe Haldeman was at pains to point out that it was not a sequel to *The Forever War*. Nor indeed was it, though it did address many of the same themes. But the fact that it was so often taken to be such obviously did not escape the notice of the

publishers. Somebody, it seems, has pointed out the Joe that a genuine sequel to *The Forever War* is just what the public want, and therefore it is bound to be a great hit, so he should write one, pronto. Whoever said this has got just what they deserve.

There isn't actually much to the plot of *Forever Free*, but a brief synopsis is probably in order. As you may remember, at the end of the Forever War, most of mankind has become a clone-based hive mind, in many ways quite similar to their supposed enemies, the Taurans. Only the Forever War veterans, separated from Earth by the massive time debt incurred through the relativistic effects of their inter-stellar travel, are still individual humans. The hive mind, known as Man, has to find something to do with these trained killers. So they find a suitably harsh-but-survivable colony planet and ship them all off there where they can be kept safe, and incidentally act as useful back-up just in case evolution happens to throw up some feature that might enhance Man's genetically engineered perfection. Unsurprisingly, the veterans are none too happy about being kept in a zoo, albeit a planet-sized one, and plot their escape.

So far, so good. For the first third or so of the book it seems like we might be getting another Haldeman classic. Joe has found some more interesting questions to pose, and it is quite clear that he is writing an allegory about America - a country founded on the pioneer spirit which no longer has anywhere to go. I also love the way that he illustrates the vast time periods that the Forever War covered by having the characters suffer cultural confusion and mangle clichés. William Mandela, the hero, is over a thousand years old in Earth time, but in his fifties elapsed time. He and his wife are the only people left alive who remember the 20th Century. At one point in the book Mandela's son accuses him of living in a

fantasy world of "Cowboys and Hindus". Mandela refrains from correcting him. After all, the kid can hardly be expected to know the difference between a Hindu and a Pakistani.

Unfortunately, whilst there are many good signs at the beginning of the book, it quickly becomes clear that Joe doesn't have much of a story to tell and that there is a lot of padding. In this particular case it comes in the form of long digressions about engineering that rival Kim Stanley Robinson for dullness. The first half or so of the book is all heavily padded set-up, and you keep looking at the number of pages you have left to go and wondering when the main story is going to start. For about two chapters it does, and it looks like something very interesting might happen. Then the whole thing goes completely off the rails. The last third of the book is strongly reminiscent of *Number of the Beast* in its self-indulgence and nonsense.

Which is not to say that Haldeman's writing skills have deteriorated the way Heinlein's did in later life. I'm sure he can still turn out a darn good book if he wants to. Heck, he won a Hugo only last year. What I think we have here is an author who was badgered into writing a book he didn't want to do and did not have any enthusiasm for. If you are a Haldeman fan, don't read this, it is embarrassing.

Forever Free - Joe Haldeman - Ace - hardcover

A Phoenix Rises

Following the debacle of *Left to His Own Devices* I was half convinced that no one would ever let Mary Gentle write a novel again. This would be a sad thing, because when she is good she is very, very good. She had just been horrid rather too often. So, when many months ago Roz Kaveney showed me the manuscript for Mary's latest work I was immediately keen to get

hold of the book. It has been a while, but so far it is well worth the wait.

I say so far because *A Secret History* is only volume #1 of *The Book of Ash*. As I understand it, the book is being published in paperback in parts in the US and as a single hardback volume in the UK. Amazon says the hardback is #1 only, and Locus says it is both, and I know which I believe. Goodness only knows why publishers have to do things like this. Probably to confuse Hugo administrators. Anyway, so far I have the first US book. Part 2 should be out in the US by now, but not being there I'll probably end up having to buy the UK hardback because I want to know what happens next, and I want to know Now!

Before getting into the plot, a bit of category neepery is in order. In the cover blurb S.M. Stirling describes the book as "One of the best fantasies I've read in the past 15 years". I won't dispute that it is good, but it is a very strange sort of fantasy. There is certainly little sense of the numinous here: a short mystical encounter at the beginning and a few vague hints of Zoroastrianism scattered through the text are all that I could see. For the most part it is alternative history, crossed with a little conspiracy theory. What if the Visigoths rebuilt Carthage and founded an empire in North Africa? What if they warred with Christendom in the 15th Century? What if they had preserved ancient wisdom and could really do some of the things that mediaeval alchemists thought possible, like build golems? And what if this was really all true but it had been systematically expunged from history?

There is more than a touch of *Foucault's Pendulum* to *Ash*. Cut with the supposed translations of the heroine's life (she is a mercenary captain who becomes embroiled in the Carthaginian war) are reprints of emails between the historian who is doing the research and his editor.

Things get more and more mysterious as the book progresses. On the one hand factual evidence of the events of the story turns up, and on the other vital manuscripts disappear from libraries. And meanwhile, of course, Ash herself gets into deep trouble.

And this is not just a literary conceit: the novel within a novel idea. It is done quite deliberately to get us to question just how much we really know about history. Ash herself is loosely based on Joan of Arc: a teenage girl who rises to be a notable war leader. But Joan is all too often portrayed as a spunky but spaced-out kid whose sole contribution to the war effort was to shame the French soldiery into fighting back against the English. What if she was really a hard-bitten, foul-mouthed professional soldier who could hack and slay with the best of them? Wouldn't she have had to have been? How many other women fought as soldiers down through history but never got reported because our history books have been written by men who lived in an age where, at least in polite society, such a thing was unthinkable?

Did I mention that the history is good? Oh boy! Mary has sure done her research here. She knows the characters, the places, the tactics, and the names of every single piece of a suit of Milanese plate. And she's not afraid to play with it either. For example, she engineers a meeting between Ash and a historical female mercenary captain: Onorata Rodiani. Strictly speaking, Rodiani died five years before the supposed date of the narrative. Cheekily Mary has her historian note that the original author of the papers he is translating probably invented the scene because he felt that the two famous women warriors should have met. She then goes on to have Ash and Rodiani discuss weapons and armour in exactly the manner you would imagine other women discussing dress designs and embroidery. It's wonderful.

My only concern is that this is only the first volume, and we know from past experience that Mary is quite capable of ruining a perfectly good story because she thinks that you should never allow readers to have their expectations fulfilled. I have no idea how she is going to end this one, and right now I can't think of anything truly awful that she could do, but she has a seriously devious imagination. Shudder.

A Secret History: Ash, Volume #1 - Mary Gentle
- Avon - softcover

A Fox's Tale

If there is little air of fantasy in Ash, you only have to turn to Neil Gaiman to find more than you could possibly ask for. There are a few fantasists around today who can genuinely make your skin crawl with their invocation of myth. Charles De Lint is one who springs to mind. But I don't think that there is anyone better at it than Neil.

Of course it helps to have the right material. Some, I suspect, will complain that *The Dream Hunters* is not an original story, but merely a translation and retelling of a Japanese fairy tale. So it may be, but there are no new stories. Everything we write is simply a reworking of some existing theme, or collection of themes. Besides, it seems quite clear from the story that, ancient Japanese folk tale or no, it is a Sandman story, and thus is fair game for Neil. Like all good archetypes, the King of Dreams exists in more than one culture. Even the inevitably cryptic Zen utterances that He is required to make seem entirely in keeping with the character that Neil has already defined.

So, what do we have? A novelette, about a monk, a fox, a wicked magician, unbounded love, and a journey to the Land of Dream. It is great stuff. I cried reading it. But somewhere in the back of

my mind, a small thought formed. Morpheus did say at the end that there were lessons to be learned, and mine is this. When you are writing comics, you don't have many words to play with (well, unless you are Don McGregor). Some may think that makes it easier, and if you are lazier it does. But if you care about your writing it means that you tend to put much more care into selecting each word that you use than you might when constructing a novel. That, I think, is the case with Neil, which is why he is so good at this sort of stuff.

The story is, of course, illustrated. No Dave McKean this time: the artist is, appropriately, a Japanese animator called Yoshitaka Amano. His work on *The Dream Hunters* will not be to everyone's taste, but I think the Impressionist edge to it is well suited to Sandman. As a veteran of anime, Amano draws very androgynous men, which is also perfect for the Lord of Dreams. Much to my surprise, my favourite picture is the one of Morpheus as the Fox God, which is almost entirely black.

The book is of course very expensive for a novelette, but then with a full colour illustration on every other page this is hardly surprising. I think it is well worth it.

Sandman: The Dream Hunters - Neil Gaiman, illustrated by Yoshitaka Anamo - DC Comics/Vertigo - hardcover

Hugos Revisited

Since the last issue we have held our annual Hugo brainstorming sessions at the Bay Area Science Fiction Association. This is a considerable improvement over my personal opinions as it throws the debate open to people who read a lot of short fiction and watch a lot of films. I figured you might be interested in the results. You still have until the end of March to vote, and forms (well, "orms",

which has caused considerable relief amongst the ranks of people who managed to mis-spell San Francisco on the cover of one of their progress reports) are available from the Chicon web site (<http://www.chicon.org>). Many thanks to Kevin for compiling the list and checking out publishers and the like. Here's what he wrote, with footnotes from me.

Although there are only five nominations allowed in each category, we've included more than five possibilities in most categories. Think of this list as BASFA's "some of us thought it was good enough to be nominated" list, even though only five can make the ballot.

Novel (>40,000 words): William Gibson, *All Tomorrow's Parties*, (Putnam); Elizabeth Hand, *Black Light*, (Harper Prism); Lois McMaster Bujold, *A Civil Campaign*, (Baen Books); George RR Martin, *A Clash of Kings*, (Bantam Doubleday Dell)¹; Neal Stephenson, *Cryptonomicon*, (Avon Books); Vernor Vinge, *A Deepness in the Sky*, (St Martins Press); Terry Pratchett, *The Fifth Elephant*, (Doubleday); Sean McMullen, *Souls in the Great Machine*, (Saint Martin's Press); Pat Murphy, *There and Back Again*, (Tor Books); Jamil Nasir, *Tower of Dreams*, (Spectra); James Gardner, *Vigilant*, (Avon)

Novella (15,000-40,000 words): Kim Newman, *Andy Warhol's Dracula*, (http://www.eventhorizon.com/sfzine/fiction/warhols_dracula/index.html); Castro/Oltion, *The Astronaut from Wyoming*, (Analog 7-8/99); Andy Duncan, *The Executioner's Guild*, (Asimov's 8/99); Allen Steele, *The Exile of Evening Star*, (Asimov's 1/99); David Marusek, *Wedding Album*, (Asimov's 6/99)

¹ Personally I don't nominate part-works, otherwise I'd have Tad Williams in there too, but others felt this was worthy of inclusion.

Novelette (7,500-15,000 words): Paul J. McAuley, *Back Door Man*, (F&SF 3/99); R. Garcia y Robertson, *Diana by Starlight*, (Asimov's 3/99); Lois Tilton, *Dragon's Teeth*, (Asimov's 1/99); Robert Reed, *Game of the Century*, (F&SF 5/99); Severna Park, *Harbingers*, (Event Horizon 1/99); Mary Turzillo, *Mars Is No Place for Children*, (SF Age 5/99); Sean McMullen, *New Words of Power*, (Interzone 8/99); Paolo Bacigalupi, *Pocketful of Dharma*, (F&SF 2/99); Neil Gaiman, *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, (Vertigo/DC)

Short Story (<7,500 words): Paul McAuley, *Alien TV*, (Interzone 4/99); Michael Swanwick, *Ancient Engines*, (Asimov's 2/99); Peter David, *The Archetype*, (F&SF 2/99); Michael Nethercott, *The Beastly Red Lurker*, (F&SF 8/99); Severna Park, *The Breadfruit Empire*, (Event Horizon 5/99); William Sanders, *Dirty Little Cowards*, (Asimov's 6/99); Larry Tritten, *History's Mysteries*, (F&SF 5/99); Michael Swanwick, *Scherzo with Tyrannosaur*, (Asimov's 7/99); Catherine S. McMullen, *Teddy Cat*, (Interzone 8/99)

Best Related Book: Charles Sheffield, *Borderlands of Science*, (Baen); Hy Bender, *The Sandman Companion*, (Vertigo/DC); Frank M. Robinson, *Science Fiction of the 20th Century*, (Collectors Press); Pratchett/Stewart/Cohen, *The Science of Discworld*, (Ebury Press)

Dramatic Presentation: *Being John Malkovich*; *Bicentennial Man*; *Earshot* (Buffy the Vampire Slayer); *Hush* (Buffy the Vampire Slayer); *Dogma*; *Galaxy Quest*; *The Matrix*; *The Mummy*; *Mystery Men*; *October Sky*; *Princess Mononoke*²; *Sixth Sense*; *South Park: The Movie*; *Bride of Chaotica* (Star Trek: Voyager)³; *Toy Story 2*

² Original by Hayao Miyazake, English script by Neil Gaiman.

³ In our defence I think this was included under the "so bad it is good" criterion.

Professional Editor: Karen Berger, Jack Dann, Ellen Datlow, Betsy Mitchell, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, David Pringle, Gordon Van Gelder, Janeen Webb

Professional Artist: Yoshitaka Amano, Diane Dillon, Leo Dillon, Phil Foglio⁴, Gary Ruddell⁵, Nick Stathopoulos⁶

Semiprozine: Interzone⁷, Locus, Nova Express⁸, SF Weekly, Speculations, Tangent⁹

Fanzine: *Ansible*, ed. David Langford, (<http://www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/SF-Archives/Ansible/Ansible.html>); *Banana Wings*, ed. Plummer/Brialey; *Bento*, ed. Levine/Yule (<http://www.spiritone.com/~dlevine/bento/index.html>); *Emerald City*, ed. Cheryl Morgan (<http://www.emcit.com/>); *Ethel the Aardvark*, ed. Paul Ewins (<http://avoca.vicnet.net.au/~msfc/>); *File 770*, ed. Mike Glycer (<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mglyer/f770/index.html>); *Plokta*, ed. Scott/Davies/Scott (<http://www.plokta.com/>); *Thyme*, ed. Alan Stewart; *The Unravalled Ferret*, ed.

⁴ Whom I note is back working for *Dragon* magazine again.

⁵ For the cover of *There and Back Again*.

⁶ For the covers to *Dreaming Down Under* and the Aussiecon Three Programme Book.

⁷ Yes, I know that some of the *Interzone* crowd think that the Hugos are worthless because they honour fans as well as pros, but David Pringle seems quite keen on winning another one.

⁸ Sorry Lawrence. I'm sure that Michael Nelson will re-categorise you.

⁹ I note that Severna Park lists "Regular Reviewer for Tangent Magazine" amongst her professional credits. I don't care if she doesn't get paid, if a magazine has quality authors as regular contributors that makes it semi-pro in my eyes.

Brenda Daverin
(<http://members.aol.com/lysana/>)

Fan Writer: Brenda Daverin, Steve Davies¹⁰, Bob Devney, Terry Frost, Mike Glycer, Ian Gunn, Dave Langford, Cheryl Morgan, Mark Plummer

Fan Artist: Freddie Baer, Ian Gunn, Sue Mason, Kerri Valkova, Taral Wayne

John W. Cambell Award For Best New Author (Not a Hugo, but selected like one): Catherine S. McMullen¹¹

Footnote

One of the advantages of popping back and fore across the Atlantic all the time is that I can buy Kevin presents in Past Times. Last year for Christmas I got him a desk calendar for which every day provides an English word that has fallen into disuse. (Well, mostly, the compiler clearly isn't a cook.) Anyway, February 11th presented him with the term "dorbel" which apparently means, "a dull-witted pedant, a foolish pretender to learning". Now, anyone who has spent any time reading Internet newsgroups will know that such people are as common as pigeons in those media. It therefore occurs to me that this word is urgently in need of revival. I think a campaign is in order. Yes?

And still with ancient English practices, a strange legal tale. I've commented before about how it wasn't until the mid seventies that parts of Australia finally made it an offence to kill Aborigines.

¹⁰ Some of the articles in *Plokta* are now credited, so I suspect that all three main editors will be appearing in this category soon. However, our listing of Steve is as much for his hoax newsletter at Aussiecon Three as for *Plokta*.

¹¹ As I recall, Catherine is currently 12 years old, and she's just had her first story in *Interzone*. Not bad, huh?

Well Aussies, it is your turn for revenge, because the Poms are just as bad, if not worse. Believe it or not, it is perfectly legal to kill a Welshman in England. There are, of course, one or two restrictions. The killing has to take place within the Close of Hereford Cathedral, and it must be done with a longbow at a distance of 12 paces. But the law has never been repealed. I wonder if this is sufficient grounds for me to apply for political asylum in the US?

Next issue: Gene Wolfe, Maureen McHugh, more Severna Park, more Gormenghast and probably some other stuff as well. There's a new Jeff Noon on the way but I'm not sure when I'll be able to get it. In the meantime, take care and have fun.

Ciao,

Love 'n' hugs,

Cheryl