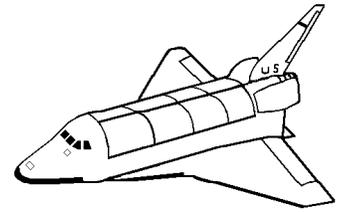


The



# SHUTTLE October 2006

*The Next NASFA Meeting will be 14 October 2006 — One Week Earlier than Normal — at the Regular Time and Location*

*Con†Stellation XXV: Cygnus will be 20–22 October 2006*

*Final Concom Meeting at the Hotel, Thursday 19 October 2006*

## 🔔 Oyez, Oyez 🔔

The next NASFA meeting will be **Saturday 14 October 2006**. This is **one week earlier than normal** because Con†Stellation is occupying the usual meeting weekend. The club meeting will be at the **regular time and location**. Both the program and the location of the After-The-Meeting Meeting are TBD at press time.

There will be a final **Con†Stellation concom meeting Thursday 19 October** at the hotel to conduct pre-convention setup activities. Before dinner there will be lots of unloading to do, and after dinner the Art Show setup will take place. Speaking of dinner, that get-together with staff, guests, and others is also on the schedule. Check with Doug and Mary for details.

## Announcements

### CON†STELLATION ON TRACK

Con†Stellation XXV: Cygnus will be held 20–22 October 2006 at the Holiday Inn Express in Huntsville AL. Invited guests include GoH David Drake, Artist GoH Theresa Mather, MC Stephen Hickman, and Special GoH Glen Cook. Others

*(continued on page 3)*

## RIP Wilson “Bob” Tucker

Wilson “Bob” Tucker died Friday 6 October 2006 at age 91. He had been hospitalized in St. Petersburg FL for several days. He was predeceased by his wife Fern in June of this year. Tucker was an author (science fiction and mystery) and fan; but mostly he was widely beloved. In addition to his biological children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, he is survived by innumerable fans and pros for whom he was their adopted grandfather.

Bob Tucker (as he was known to most fans in this region) had several connections to Huntsville fandom. He was the Fan GoH at 1980’s MidSouthCon, at which many of the people who eventually founded NASFA found each other. He was the Special Guest (the only official guest) at Con†Stellation V, a semi-relaxicon held the same year Huntsville hosted Deep-SouthCon 23. And, he attended several other early Huntsville conventions, bringing his special “smooth” hospitality to all of them.

In the wider world of sf, Tucker was widely acknowledged for his contributions as both a fan and a writer. He was on the committee of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Worldcon. He won one Hugo, and two Retro-Hugos, as a fan writer and fanzine publisher. His most celebrated sf novel is probably *The Year of the Quite Sun* which won the 1970 John W. Campbell Memorial Award. SFWA

*(continued on page 2)*

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**Deadline for the November 2006 issue of *The NASFA Shuttle* is Friday, 3 November 2006.**



between them.

Sam also brought an email with the subject "A Plea for Firefly." They asked us to tell Stephen Hickman that Steven Brust sends his best. According to the email, The Ambulance is a fandom project that would like volunteers to help restore the ambulance prop from "Ariel," an episode of Firefly. At the time the email was written, the prop was somewhere in Las Vegas. Steve thinks this was the same prop he saw on display at Worldcon. Forwarding the email to Stephen Hickman was the only action to come out of the discussion.

Steve volunteered NASFA to man a table at the Von Braun Astronomical Society's Astronomy Day, on September 30, from 9 AM to 1 PM. We need someone to sit out with flyers, and talk to anyone who stops by. Mia gave a very tentative yes to volunteer, because she may have to work during that time. She will let Steve know if she can't make it, and the club can make other arrangements.

### CONVENTION BUSINESS

There will be a convention.

As Treasurer, Sam reports that Con†Stellation is currently \$1717.59 to the good. Mary got an email from Theresa Mather's husband. However, not everything is paid for yet. [Actually, little is paid for yet, I would think. Many of the biggest bills come due shortly before or shortly after the convention. -ED]

Some reimbursements were handled.

Several people made sure that they were pre-registered for Con†Stellation.

Overall, the club is currently a little more than five hundred dollars to the good. [Well, not after I put in for *Shuttle* expenses. -ED]

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

Sam moved that we adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 6:36:38P.

There was a dual program. Doug decided to get one of the two annual NASFA auctions that he's required to give out of the way, in the easiest way for him. If he doesn't announce it ahead of time, and no one knows to bring stuff to auction, then it will be a really short auction. However, Mia and Adam spoiled his plans by going home to get their stuff, which was auctioned after they got back.

Afterwards, Steve gave his last-minute, whirlwind Worldcon show-and-tell and slideshow. These were photos and assorted stuff Steve got when he attended Worldcon 64/L.A.con IV, in Anaheim, California the month before.

The After-the-Meeting Meeting was held at Nancy Cucci and Ray Pietruszka's house, in honor of various September birthdays.

*(Announcements — continued from page 1)*

expected to attend include Julie Cochrane, Eric Flint, Sarah A. Hoyt, Jack McDevitt, Dr. Travis S. Taylor, and T. K. F. Weisskopf; with a special appearance scheduled by Surf/Rockabilly/Gothic band Jeff Ugly Shoes & The Cemetery Surfers <<http://www.myspace.com/voxtones>>.

The membership rate is \$40, with discounts for children accompanied by a paid adult membership (\$20 ages 4–10, free ages 0–3). Rooms at the HIE are \$68, suites are \$94 (both plus applicable taxes), for 1–4 people per night. For reservations, call 256-721-1000 or 800-345-7720 (both connect directly to the hotel). You will need to mention Con†Stellation for the convention hotel rate.

For further information check the web at <[\[stellation.org\]\(http://www.stellation.org\)> or email <\[constell@con-stellation.org\]\(mailto:constell@con-stellation.org\)>, or write Con†Stellation XXV: Cygnus, P. O. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815-4857.](http://www.con-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

### ROCKY HORROR VISITS HUNTSVILLE

If you're traveling to Con†Stellation and want even *more* to do that weekend, you may be interested to know that Renaissance Theatre will be staging a production of Richard O'Brien's *The Rocky Horror Show*. Performances will be October 20 & 21 at 8P, October 22 at 2:30P, October 26 & 27 at 8P, October 28 at 7P and 12M, October 29 at 2:30P, November 2, 3, & 4 at 8P, and November 5 at 2:30P.

Tickets are \$18. More information can be had by calling 256-536-3117 or checking the Renaissance Theatre web site at <[www.renaissancetheatre.net](http://www.renaissancetheatre.net)>. This is a very small theater, seating less than 100, so if you're interested in a particular showtime you'd be well advised to contact them expeditiously.

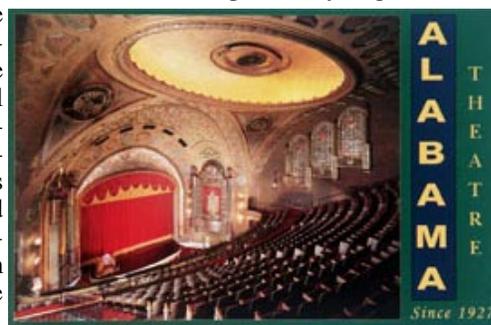
### DOCTOR WHO RECOGNIZED

TV series *Doctor Who* will be recognized by the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the longest-running science fiction television series. According to released figures, *DW* has aired more than 700 episodes (beginning in 1963 on the BBC) covering 173 story lines. The category was newly introduced for the 2007 edition of *Guinness*.

### PHANTOM HAUNTS BIRMINGHAM

The Alabama Theatre <[www.alabamatheatre.com](http://www.alabamatheatre.com)> in Birmingham is hosting a special showing of the 1925 silent version of *Phantom of the Opera*, starring Lon Chaney and Mary Philbin. The movie, accompanied by organist Tom

Helms on the theater's renowned pipe organ, will be 8P Saturday 28 October. Tickets are \$10 and the box office opens an hour before showtime.



Helms on the "Showplace of the South") is a grandly-restored theater from the golden age of large movie theaters. The theater is in downtown Birmingham, at 1817 Third Avenue North.

### TREK AUCTION STELLAR

Results of the recent three-day auction of *Star Trek* memorabilia by auction house Christie's exceeded all expectations. The total well more than doubled pre-auction estimates, at just north of \$7 million. Every lot (about 1000) sold, many for far more than expected. Items from all five *Trek* series and all ten movies went under the gavel.

The highest price was fetched by a model of the Next-Gen *Enterprise* — which went for \$576,000, apparently a record for any *Trek* memorabilia. The pre-auction estimate for that lot was \$15,000 to \$25,000.

Many of the top sellers were in the models and miniatures category. The top-grossing costume item was Dr. McCoy's space suit from TOS episode "The Tholian Web," which fetched \$144,000.

This was in some sense the first "official" *Trek* auction, as it was of items direct from the vaults of CBS Paramount Television. The sale could be seen live via The History Channel's web site, and will be the subject of a History Channel documentary.

# Awards News

## BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY AWARDS

Winners of the 2006 British Fantasy Awards <[www.britishfantasyociety.org.uk/info/bfsawards.htm](http://www.britishfantasyociety.org.uk/info/bfsawards.htm)> were announced Sunday 24 September 2006 at Fantasycon 30 <[www.fantasycon.org.uk](http://www.fantasycon.org.uk)> at the Britannia Hotel, Nottingham UK. The winners are:

- Best Novel** (The August Derleth Fantasy Award) .....Neil Gaiman, *Anansi Boys*  
**Best Novella** .....Stuart Young, "The Mask Behind the Face"  
**Best Anthology** .....Allan Ashley, *The Elastic Book of Numbers*  
**Best Collection** .....Joe Hill, *20<sup>th</sup> Century Ghosts*  
**Best Short Fiction** .....Joe Hill, *Best New Horror*  
**Best Artist** .....Les Edwards  
**Best Small Press** .....Peter Crowther, PS Publishing  
**BFS Special Award** (The Karl Edward Wagner Award) .....Stephen Jones  
**BFS Committee Founders Award** .....Keith Walker, Rosemary Pardoe, Phil Spencer, and David Sutton

## SUNBURST AWARD

The 2006 Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic <[www.sunburstaward.org](http://www.sunburstaward.org)> was announced 26 September 2006. The juried award includes both a hand-crafted medallion incorporating the "Sunburst" logo and a cash award of \$1,000CDN. The selected writer must be Canadian and must have published a speculative fiction novel or book-length collection during the previous calendar year.

The winner is Holly Phillips for *In the Palace of Repose* (Prime Books, ISBN 1894815580). The other shortlisted works were *Someone Comes to Town, Someone Leaves Town* (Cory Doctorow, Tor Books), *Gravity Wells: Speculative Fiction Stories* (James Alan Gardner, HarperCollins Canada), *The Wave Theory of Angels* (Alison MacLeod, Penguin Canada), and *Spin* (Robert Charles Wilson, Tor Books).

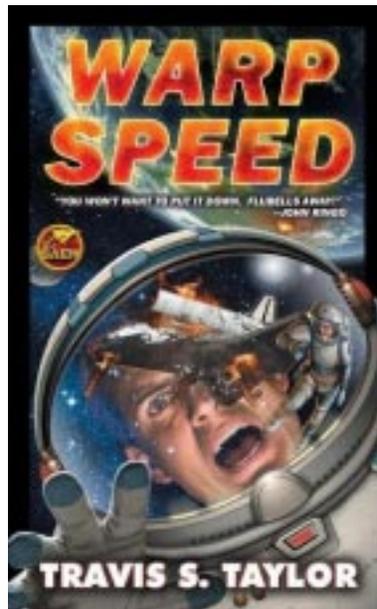
Jurors for 2006 were Larissa Lai, Janet McNaughton, Uppinder Mehan, Derryl Murphy, and Élisabeth Vonarburg. Jurors for 2007 will be Steven Erikson, James Alan Gardner, Tom Henighan, Emily Pohl-Weary, and Caitlin Sweet.

## Taylor, Taylor, and Ringo

Book Reviews by Nic Brown  
<[www.bmoviemanager.com](http://www.bmoviemanager.com)>

*Warp Speed*, by Travis S. Taylor, cover art by David Mattingly, Baen Books, paperback, 25 April 2006, ISBN 1416520635, 384pp, \$7.99 (hardback, ISBN 0743488628, \$22.00)

Someone once said that if you want to be a good writer you should write what you know. *Warp Speed* by Travis S. Taylor shows that not only does he have a good eye for story telling, but also that he knows a lot! The book is written in the first person perspective following Dr. Neil Anson Clemons, Physicist, Engineer, and a University Professor. Anson, as his friends call him, is working on developing alternative propulsion systems for the space program. In other words he's trying to find a way to make space travel more practical than strapping



people to giant rockets and shooting them into the sky. Specifically he is working on developing a warp drive to allow faster-than-light travel.

The book takes a lot of interesting turns. In most science fiction that I've read the technologies are more of a back drop that facilitates the plot. "I want my character to fly like Superman so he has the Dyson 3000 antigravity belt," or even more simply, "my character has a sword made of energy, never mind how, he just does." In Taylor's book, the technology he uses starts

almost with where we are today. It's set a few years in the future, but nothing seems extraordinarily out of place, no ray guns or teleportation. As Anson's work on the warp drive progresses a number of new technologies are brought into play besides the warp drive but the reader is not asked to simply accept them. Rather, they become a part of their logical development. In fact it all was introduced so realistically that I'm surprised we haven't already developed many of the things Anson and his team discover.

The focus on the technology in *Warp Speed* doesn't mean the characters are skipped or glossed over. The character of Anson Clemons is brought into very clear focus as a "renaissance man" with a number of talents and interests that blend together to complement each other and help explain his motives and thought processes. The other characters are well rounded, but they are seen through Anson's eyes which colors them more to how he perceives them. One does pick up on an endearing bit of absentmindedness from Anson, as he "forgets" to mention significant developments in his life, only to have them pop up in the story with an "oh yeah, did I mention that..."

Don't let me fool you, *Warp Speed* isn't just a book about the development of a new propulsion technology. This is good science fiction with plenty of action to keep the reader hooked. In fact, at times the action comes so fast you almost can't get your breath as the characters are thrust from one situation to another with no breaks. One minute they are in space, then they are in a forest with tornadoes, then they are facing terrorists, it almost makes a person dizzy, but it still manages to flow well.

I recommend *Warp Speed* by Travis S. Taylor. It is a real page turner that makes some of the science behind science fiction come alive. This is the first in a series with the second book *The Quantum Connection* due out in paperback soon. To quote author John Ringo "Flubells away!" which will make much more sense if you read the book. Check it out!

*Von Neumann's War*, by John Ringo and Travis S. Taylor, cover art by Kurt Miller, Baen Books, hardback, August 2006, ISBN 1416520759, 400pp, \$25.00

*Von Neumann's War* may be science fiction, but the authors went to a lot of trouble to ground it in science fact. The

book doesn't have a traditional prologue; instead the reader is presented with the executive summary report for a probe sent to Mars as part of the "Neighborhood Watch" program. Astronomers and scientists noticed that Mars had begun to rapidly change color. This, coupled with a loss of contact with all Martian probes, alerts scientists that something extraordinary and possibly extraterrestrial is happening to the once red planet.

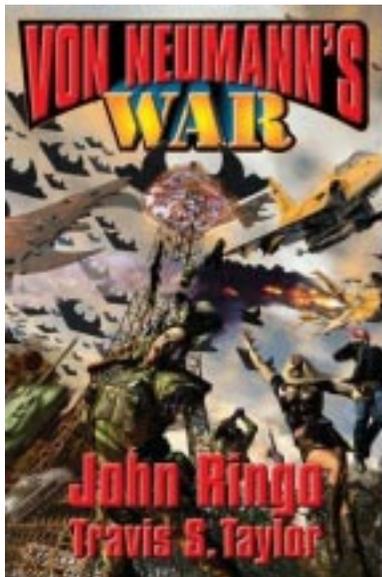
"Neighborhood Watch" scientists are alarmed by what they find. Just before it is destroyed in an attack of unknown origin, the probe relays pictures of huge structures, canals, and roadways all over Mars. Now "Neighborhood Watch" shifts from being the lead investigation group for the phenomenon, to being the nexus for preparing defenses against the advancing aliens as it becomes clear that Earth is in their path.

Ringo and Taylor don't skip over the science in the rush to science fiction. Rather, they show how existing technologies logically evolve in the face of the threat. They also avoid stereotypical clichés in their characters. Soldiers aren't one-dimensional killing machines and scientists aren't academics with no sense of the real world. In other words, the characters are real people and this helps the reader relate to them during the course of the book.

Take for example the idea for the "Neighborhood Watch" probe mission: some of the "rocket scientists" employed in Huntsville-based aerospace industry, come up with the idea while drinking beer and eating chicken wings at Hooters. Scribbling their notes on napkins as they design the entire mission, the reader might wonder how many projects have actually been conceived there.

Make no mistake though, just because the book covers the science behind the sci-fi doesn't mean there isn't plenty of action. The tension simply shifts from attempting to find out what is going on, to finding a way to stop the aliens. Battles are fought on many "planes" at one time as scientists race to find new weapons, and soldiers try to make them work against what at first appears to be an unstoppable alien threat. The book's final battle pits soldier against alien machine, and scientist against alien intelligence. If mankind fails on either front, the human race may face extinction at the unfeeling hands of advancing alien menace.

The authors have created a book that is entertaining on many levels. Blending science, action, and humor, *Von Neumann's War* is the first in a new series from John Ringo and Travis S. Taylor. Although it works as a stand-alone novel, by the end of the book you are left turning the pages and hoping for more. Fortunately, John Ringo has a reputation for turning out books at breakneck speed without sacrificing quality in the process, so with any luck a sequel to this book will be on the shelves soon. I give *Von Neumann's War* my highest recommendation for its creativity and originality.



## Inside Information

### No Need for a Ring — Chapter 7

by PieEyedDragon

Azakh hated fishing. He hated every thing and every one, like all goblins. "Fish, or be cut-up for bait!" the Chief had ordered; so here he was. A light safety line tied him to the half-full floating fish basket, with its socketed torch. A heavier rope connected the basket back thru fifty feet of very cold water to the rocky shore. The Chief ought to be standing out here, waist-deep in night-dark water.

Azakh would have growled, but kept silent and very still. He still had to catch more fish. He slowly waved the rotten bait thru the water and then hung it back beside the torch. It was black, but some of the toenails still glittered.

The torch suddenly jerked as the rope tied to the wandle-basket was tugged. Someone was trying to get Azakh's attention. He slowly lowered the fish-grabber, turning his upper body to see who it was.

Ten feet shoreward, two huge eyes reflected the torch light. They hung six feet above the water.

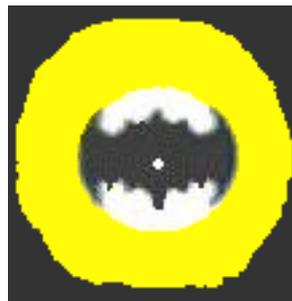
He stood frozen; like a little bird — unable to utter a sound or move under the gaze of those eyes! It felt like all his memories were being ripped out by their bloody roots! Then, the snakey neck and head struck forward with a sidewise slash of sharp teeth that sliced open the right side of Azakh's neck clear to the spine.

"Bleahhh!" gagged the monster, which then tore open the basket and devoured the fish — followed by the burning head of the torch. It invoked the Law of Contagion in a short, spoken spell, and bit off the goblin's right ear, swallowing it. Releasing the goblin, it considered the blackened "bait" and swallowed that too. Its great eyes were bright with cold wrath as they stared toward the shore.

"Elf," it muttered "and still alive."

The head submerged, and a powerful tail swept back and forth, propelling the monster further down the shore to another spot. One hundred feet off shore, it stopped, and bent its magic upon the tokens it had collected. Keeping still and submerged, it "listened" to the enemy.

— O — O — O —



Balúk had been very busy for weeks, checking all the supplies and weapons that they had in Shaborc-kun. Bad times were coming; and he was glad. Weeks ago, his watchers at the East gate had looked out to see what had dimmed the light of the rising sun. That monstrous *shadow* had been no cloud at all!

Balúk was one of the older hobgoblins; and had actually served in the dragon-pits of Angband before Morgoth, the Dark Lord, had been brought down. Down, but not destroyed! Shaborc-kun, on this cold shore, was the closest point of land to where drowned Angband lay; off to the northwest.

Thangorodrim was smashed, and the pits opened, but

Morgoth would return. Soon! That *shadow* across the hated sun was the first *sign*! And Midwinter's Long Night was at hand.

Morgoth was returning! The goblins of Shaborc-kun would be ready. The Dark Lord took no excuses.

— O — O — O —

They brought Azakh's body, and the smashed fishing gear, before Balúk, who examined it all.

Balúk: Looks like the work of a bear. Bears should all be nicely sleeping now. This one woke up hungry and stole our fish. Well, he owes us *meat*! His will do; with a nice bearskin thrown in! We'll just have to make do with roast goblin tonight (evil laughter). Leave this one with the cooks!

*Go!* Track this bear! The only scent left on these tokens is fishy. The water has taken all else.

— O — O — O —

The hunters searched up and down the coast all the rest of the night, and back up the game trails toward the hills; even toward the old dwarf coal mine. No sign nor scent of any bear could they discover. They returned grumbling, to wait out the short day before the Long Night. Some taunted the prisoner suggestively, but there was little response anymore.

— O — O — O —

After the dim sunset, Balúk goes forth down the rocky beach and thrusts a torch into the prepared driftwood pile to begin the celebration of darkness.

Balúk: (shouting) Great Dark Lord! Morgoth: Slayer of Light! We await your bidding! Show us a Sign!

There is nothing but the sound of wind and wave. The feasting and carousing go on for hours. Then, just before midnight, a lookout shouts "From the Sea! Eyes! Glowing Eyes!"

As one, the entire goblin host stares out over the water; out of which a slender, snake head rises: looking at them!

Balúk recognized it at once for a young dragon. But there were no young dragons! The last Hatching had been many, many centuries ago. Only two dragons had escaped the destruction of Angband. Scatha had been moderately egg-heavy or they would have been the last. The only other remaining original dragon was the fearsome Cold Drake, away east at Forochel. For several reasons, *he* would lay no dragon eggs!

With Morgoth's power absent, the dragons had waned. No new great dragons were born. Scatha's surviving children were all male; and all the grandchildren were sterile, lesser wyrms.

Here was the asked-for *sign*! A dragon; a *new* dragon! Morgoth's *power* was returning to the world!

— O — O — O —

Balúk: (shouting toward the sea) Emissary of the Great Dark Lord; the goblins of Shaborc-kun stand ready to serve. What news? And what name do you bear?

The dragon seems to consider the words; then moves forward and pauses just short of the shoreline. Patches of fog drift here and there. Lightning flashes from a snowstorm out at sea, followed by a rumbling peal of thunder. The dragon looks up as though considering the positions of the stars. Then; it sets one clawed foot on shore, with deliberate force; and *speaks*!

Dragon: *I see all the world in a Shadow of Horror! And so, That is my name: Palantíri Eä Daedeloth!*

*Spread the word of my arrival! All must use the full name. When they speak of me, I shall know it! Do not call me "PAL"! For short; you may call me "PED"!*

The dragon emits a long, trumpeting brassy call that echoes off the hillside; and then it slithers toward the fire.

Balúk: (looks hard at the scaly monster, and laughs with

delight) *A female dragon! Yes! Spread the word!*

[Some of the above beings and situations have been suggested by the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. (But you already knew that, didn't you?) Thanks also to Barry's Temple of Gojira.]

## The Monster Moves In

### No Need for a Ring — Chapter 8

by PieEyedDragon

I settle down by the fire. The goblins move well back away from me. I stick my face into the flames and inhale. The bonfire is reduced to mere glowing embers momentarily, which burst forth in new flames.

Balúk: I've not seen *that* trick before!

PED: (Fixing him with a smoldering stare) I am *many* things that you've not seen before. You should see about proper quarters for me; so you won't have to move out of yours.

Balúk: What are your needs?

PED: I prefer something underground, and not a hole in the dirt. It should be a cave or set of tunnels; failing that, a box canyon might do.

Balúk: There are some old dwarf mines not too far away (and luckily not too close, either) on the east side of these mountains. The air is bad enough to kill goblins, sometimes; with no warning.

PED: Bad air is irrelevant to me, so long as the rock is sound. Are they mines of gold, jewels, or iron?

Balúk: No. Mostly... coal.

(I already knew a very great deal about these mines. They were the main reason I chose this particular beach for coming ashore. That, and the "convenient" Orc settlement. I wanted the connections.)

PED: I want to examine these mines, now. Send a few of your subjects to be messengers and flunkies. Make sure they are expendable — in case they make me angry.

Balúk: I know just who to send. (Aside to one of his guards) Go down to the kitchens. Send up the Wall-gut Three. They've just been — reassigned.

(The goblins all laugh, horribly.)

— O — O — O —

(Three particularly dumb-looking goblins are thrust forward, making noises of fear.)

PED: Who are these miserable creatures?

Mozzish: (With prompting from the point of a spear) Eyahhh! More Horror!

Shamil: Yeep-eeep-eeep! Sham Horror!

Lawluk: Yessir! Leer Fumble!

Mozzish: We had a brother, Snurley; but elf-stroke laid him low. I thought nothing could crack his head. Just as well. We'd been on short rations and needed the meat.

Balúk: This dragon is your new boss. Serve her well and you shall be properly rewarded. Anger her, and you will all be barbecue! She wants to see the dwarf mines. Lead her there, *now*!

— O — O — O —

We cross to the eastern side of the mountains. My guides leave their bundles and supplies in a cul-de-sac off the narrow trail about 500 yards from the mine. I take their leather water bottles and tell them to make camp. I'll be down inside for a few days; investigating and house-cleaning. Then I enter the mine and start down.

For very excellent reasons I keep my mouth and nostrils

closed and my claws retracted lest they strike any sparks. I can see just fine in the darkness. Here and there fragments of iron tools lie scattered on the floor — a very subtle booby trap. I'm soon covered in a fine coating of black dust. There are several thin coal seams. The uniform lack of even a single fossilized leaf imprint in them is... very disturbing.

Part way down one long tunnel, I stop and look closely at the upper part of a timber. There, in dwarf runes, I see "Farin" below which is "Gróin." Next and together are "Óin" and "Glóin." Below that, I see newer markings that say: "Gimli." This corresponds with the memories of the Lord of the Glittering Caves which I read in Valinor.

They are not true names. Dwarves never tell those to anyone; let alone *write* them.

This particular tunnel goes more-or-less straight south and finally stops at a rough tool-marked rock wall. About another mile distant, the dwarves hoped to reach a possibly undestroyed portion of Gabilgathol. It was known to the elves as Belegost. Other names were Mickleburg and the Great Fortress; one of two old Dwarf cities in these mountains. The cities were ruined during the subsidence and flooding of the western lands at the fall of Angband. Here, the dwarves first developed their mail of linked rings. Their hauberks never rusted; remaining always bright as if freshly burnished. The other city, Tumunzahar; was the Hollowbold. Known to elves as Nogrod, it lay a little further south; beyond Mount Dolmed. The very best crafted arms were made there. Of all their artificers, Telchar the Smith was of greatest renown. He had made Angrist, the knife that cut a Silmaril from Morgoth's iron crown. Elendil's sword, Narsil, was also his work. There was some exchange of technology with Elves and Men, but the Dwarves were never outmatched in tempering steel.

The possibility of surviving treasuries and armories was a secondary consideration to the last dwarven miners. Hereabouts was the legendary place of awakening of the dwarf-fathers of the Firebeards and Broadbeams. Such places were sacred to all dwarves and so the Longbeards (Durin's folk), Ironfists, Stiffbeards, Blacklocks, and Stonefoots (Stonefeet?) gladly helped. Especially the Longbeards, since the other kindreds had sent warriors to help avenge the murder of king Thrór by the huge goblin — Azog. They fought, and died, and were burned before the gates of Khazâd-Dûm. They had put the fear of the dwarves into all the goblins, but were unable to enter that most ancient realm of Durin. Some great power resided in the dark and they were too few and worn after the war with the goblins. Some greater Power must someday come to deal with it.

I had met the Bane of Durin's Bane. He had many names. One of them was "Gandalf."

The lower levels of these mines are filled with water: the Waters Under the Earth. The atmosphere of the tunnels is full of — other things. These mines are, in a word: perfect.

Three times, down in the deeps, I stop and fill one of the water bottles hanging from my neck. I finally start back up; trailing small vortices in the air. These disturbances obey my will and do not die out. They grow and grow — picking up all manner of dust from walls and floor.

— O — O — O —

It is dark again. The three goons are still snoring.

PED: *Get up! Lazybones!*

(They tumble out of their bedrolls and come to some sort of sloppy attention.)

PED: Why are you called "Wall-gut Three"?

Mozzish: The only thing we were any good at: cleaning

entrails by slapping them against a wall.

PED: Bring torches. Set them up in front of the mine. Then, come back here and cover your heads until I call.

Goons: Yes, Your Wyrmholeyness!

[Some of the above beings and situations have been suggested by the works of J. R. R. Tolkien (But you already knew that, didn't you?)]

## Letters of Comment

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Puck

20 August 2006

(PED is itching all over. To distract her, I asked for the back story behind the current Tale.)

It took me about five millennia to wrap a ball-of-yarn magical sensor net about the Earth. The concentrations of precious metals in places like South Africa require it be renewed periodically there. I was resting in the bush after one such working in 1895 when there came a rustling in the undergrowth; and a smell of Man. The local Shamans knew I was there and left me alone. Every lion within twenty miles was adding to the distance.

A young black man named Isaac stepped into view. He had a small anglo boy with him. He explained that he worked for the boy's family, and was showing him around. We were in Orange Free State, near Bloemfontein. Three-year-old John Tolkien asked if I knew any stories. I replied that I knew many, and had been in several myself. I asked if he wanted to hear a story about Elves, Heroes, Dwarves, Wizards, or Dragons? "All!" he said at once. So I began, as it was told to me on a crippled ship in deep space by Captain Eärendil: "In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit..."

This was a long story, and the boy began getting sleepy; so I "pushed" the whole complex to him. How much or little he would eventually remember; I did not find out until about half a century ago.

[This came in time for last month's issue, but slipped through the cracks at that time. I figured that I might as well run it now. -ED]

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12 September 2006

Yup, horribly late again, but will do it anyway. Here's a quick loc on the August *Shuttle*. (Well, at least this time, I can use the Worldcon as an excuse. There's a new excuse for the file...)

Possibly for the first time since *Babylon 5*, I am looking forward to this new series *Masters of Science Fiction*. However, seeing that JMS took his name off one episode, it makes me wonder how true they'll stay to the original story in each episode. At the Worldcon, Harlan Ellison made some comment about this show, too, and at least he didn't rip it to shreds. Stephen Hawking has always been an SF reader, and he should

add some credibility. Well, we'll watch, and see what we get.

Because of work hours, and a VCR that has never really worked properly, I have yet to see any of the new *Doctor Who*, from first season to today. However, I will heartily recommend to all the Who club in Toronto, the Doctor Who Information Network. I know most of them, and they are serious fans with a serious love of the good Doctor in all his incarnations, past and especially present.

I am looking forward to this year's Astronomicon in Rochester, New York... not only will we see the Trimbles (who we saw for the first time in about 20 years at the LA Worldcon), but we will also see Hank Reinhardt and Toni Weisskopf, as they are guests of the convention. See you in November, folks!

The problem of the DSC-winning convention not even acknowledging that it was a DSC reminds me that Canadian fandom often has the same problem. Conventions bid for the chance to be that year's Convention, and then forget about it, have a room for the business meeting, award the Auroras, and that's all. There has to be more, and I think for further regional or national bids, be it DSCs, Westercons, or Conventions, there has to be a suitable promise of performance for their conventions that must be met, as in we will do the following things to show that this is a DSC/Westercon/Convention, plus... There must some efforts put into building the brand.

I'll send this off now so you will have far too much for the September issue. Or, save it for October. There should be lots of chat about the Worldcon for a few months to come. See you then!

[I got your missive a day or so after last month's issue was put to bed, Lloyd. I still had a half page or so available before reaching my preferred maximum size for the issue so I could have fit it in. My sf TV viewing is spotty... it'd probably be hard for others to discern a pattern to what shows I'll seek out and those I won't. I've never been a Dr. Who fan, though, so the new Who isn't really on my radar. *Masters of Science Fiction* might be, but it will probably depend at least in part on when it airs. Saying that Trinoc\*coN didn't acknowledge that it was a DSC would be a bit of an overstatement. (DSC got fairly heavy play in the Program Book, for instance.) But, it's quite true that I felt they did not do *enough*. In defense of the committee, I will note that they didn't seek out DSC; it was sort of thrust on them. Bidding for DeepSouthCon is often not hotly (or at all) contested and the year that Trinoc\*coN won they stepped up to bid at the last second when a DSC regular who was also a Trinoc\*coN committee member informed them that the year seemed to be going begging for even one bid. -ED]

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Chris Garcia  
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14 September 2006

Wonderful coverage of WorldCon. I had an awesome time (as you can read in issue 95 and 96 of *The Drink Tank* on <eFanzines.com>) and your coverage was brilliant. So much data! I was staying with Frank Wu and I got to sleep in the same room with his newly won Hugo. That's the closest I'll ever get to winning one!

I was also one of the guys behind the Hollister in 2008 bid. We suckered... I mean convinced, 79 poor souls into voting for us. It was a good time and we threw a good little party.

Sadly, I didn't run into any NASFiAs while I was running

around with my Chris for TAFF sign. I was hoping to get a chance.

[Thanks for the kind words about the Worldcon issue — I do put a lot of effort into it each year. All of the “just the facts” stuff can, of course, be found in various other places, but I hope I manage to add some value in the way it's presented as well as collecting all the relevant stuff in one place. I note that *The Drink Tank* is already up to issue 99 online, and at the rate you seem to be adding them may well be over the century mark before this issue of the *Shuttle* hits the bricks. So what did you think of the Hugo base design? I've seen some praise of it — in contrast to some years — but the photos I've seen so far don't seem that impressive to me. Not many NASFiAs (though at least one more than I had initially thought) went to L.A.con IV, and possibly none will make it to Japan next year. (I'd guess that Patrick Molloy and family might make it, but though they're from Huntsville they haven't been involved in NASFiA for quite some time.) A number of us will be at the NASFiC, though, if you make the pilgrimage to St. Louis. -ED]

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20 September 2006

Many thanks for the new *Shuttle* with its always-fast, always-fascinating Worldcon report. Gary's view of L.A.con is quite different from what Mike would have written had he attended but it's still good reading and provided me with a hundred times more information about the con than I'd previously received. (By the way, I realized after my last emoc that L.A.con was actually taking place while I was typing. Knowing I wasn't going to be there, I'd paid no attention to the dates, simply assuming it would be held over the traditional Labour Day weekend so it came as a real surprise a couple of days later when I heard that my friend Bob Wilson had won the Best Novel Hugo while I was still thinking the con was several days away. Talk about being out of the loop, sheesh!)

As enjoyable as most worldcon reports are to read they don't tend to be the sort of fanzine content that produces much in the way of comments, being so tied to the individual writing them. Had I attended L.A.con (not a chance! Too expensive, too big, too busy, busy, busy) I'd have had a totally different experience than Gary did, with undoubtedly the occasional overlap here and there. But I didn't go, he did, and I'm glad to have the opportunity to look over his shoulder at the L.A.con he was at.

There was a time when you took your worldcon badge off if you went out to eat because you didn't want the other people in the restaurant to know that you were one of those crazy Buck Rogers fans. With the vastly increased popularity and acceptance of SF (and the fact that worldcons are now so big that chances are most of the people in the restaurant will also be fans), I guess keeping your badge condiment free is the new priority.

I've never heard of a deceased fan having his book collection given away at a con. I'm not sure whether to be impressed by his generosity or saddened that he may not have had anyone to leave it to.

The details of the business done at the con and all the numbers on the nominations and voting aren't great reading but no doubt future SF historians will one day be grateful that you took up the rather thankless task of typing

all that information up.

[Well, the task isn't *completely* thankless, Mike... just mostly. I haven't run the numbers lately, but I'd say that the Labor Day tradition for Worldcon may well be weaker than it's ever been. Hold on a moment while I consult the "Long List" <[www.worldcon.org/wclist.html](http://www.worldcon.org/wclist.html)>... OK, the numbers themselves don't really support that, but perhaps other things do. Taking an arbitrary 5-year span ending with all currently-seated conventions, 2 of the 5 were/will not be on Labor Day weekend. That's the most in any 5-year span going back to at least the very early days. The difference between 2-of-5 and 1-of-5 (or even 0-of-5) may well not be statistically significant. Much more significant is that the 2 non-Labor Day sites in this lustrum are in the US (Los Angeles this year and Denver 2 years hence) whereas previous non-Labor Day cons have been out of North America. (There may be an exception or two, my research was hasty and not all that precise — and I should note that I'm omitting Worldcons before 1950 in this analysis as "pre modern.") -ED]

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1 October 2006

Over the past few weeks, I've been very busy with trade shows in the Toronto area... there's lots of them coming up, so I've had little time to write locs. But, here's a little time, and here's a loc on the September *Shuttle*.

Good to see news from Apogee Books down your way... Apogee is a Canadian publisher, and is located just down the highway from us. Yvonne and I are also fairly well involved with local space advocates and enthusiasts, so we run into Robert Godwin, who runs Apogee, fairly often.

The Worldcon... Yvonne and I were there, and we had a great time. For the first time in many years, we had no commitments to run a party or sit behind a bid table, so we ran

wild and did as we pleased. We went to panels, browsed the dealers' room, I was on a couple of panels, we saw the displays, hit tons of parties, and best of all saw people we hadn't seen in days, or years, or even decades. Pre-Worldcon, we did things like go to the California Science Center and the gift shop at the LA County Coroner's Department (no kidding), but the Worldcon was the centre of our holiday. We did go to the Hugos, and to the Forry Ackerman and Ray Bradbury signings. And, of course, we went to too many parties, ate and drank too much and had so much fun. Hugo-wise, I was quite pleased to finish ninth in Best Fan Writer with 14 nominations.

Chris Garcia wanted to see the roast of William Shatner. Did you want white meat or dark, Chris, or do you enjoy a good slice of ham? I want to see *Masters of Science Fiction*; if it's good, it might take the edge away from the media's ridicule of anything to do with SF, especially if someone says it's good.

And, great to see you here again, Mike [Glicksohn]... retirement must seem a little strange for you. This summer just keeps on going instead of you returning to school. We will have to come and visit you, seeing we missed the last opportunity through just plain forgetfulness, and being overly busy.

Speaking of which... off this goes to you and my LJ for archive, and we hope your autumn is warm and fuzzy. I'd be happy with warm, myself... Take care, and see you next issue.

[If all works out, Apogee's Von Braun book will be for sale at Con†Stellation, either through an existing dealer or directly by the convention. There are details to work out, though, and it could still fall through. I've heard of the LA County Coroner's gift shop actually, and for some reason I'm not particularly surprised y'all would choose to go shopping there. Heck, given opportunity I might have done so myself — finding offbeat Christmas/birthday gifts for friends is *always* on my "To Do" list. I feel a little Worldcon deprived. I've averaged vaguely 50% attendance since I started going over three decades ago, but my record is quite irregular and I'm now in the midst of a long drought. My last Worldcon was in your neck of the woods (Torcon 3, 2003) and the next likely one is Denver (2008). That was broken up a bit by the Seattle NASFiC last year (and plans for the St. Louis NASFiC next year) but it's still a long time for me between Worldcons. -ED]



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*The NASFA Shuttle* is the newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association, Inc. This is the October 2006 edition (Volume 26, Number 10). NASFA Officers for 2006: President Mary Lampert; Vice President Mike Kennedy; Secretary Steve Sloan; Treasurer Sam Smith; Program Director Doug Lampert; Publicity Director Mia West. *Shuttle* Editor Mike Kennedy.

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NASFA Dues = \$15/year (Family rates available)    Subscription only = \$10/year    Single copy = \$1.50 each.

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