

NAPA 213



N'APA Official Organ #213

Next deadline: 15 March 2012

N'APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees except as necessary for mailing paper copies. It is open to all members of the N3F within the restrictions stated below in the Rules and Regulations (copied from the last collation and updated). If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements are possible. Check with the official collator, who is currently Jean Lamb, who may be reached at tlambs1138@charter.net or by snail mail at 4846 Derby Place, Klamath Falls, OR, 97603, or on Facebook (I check it once a week, though).

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated the following day or the closest weekend, considering Jean still has a day job. Undecided members of N3F may receive the collation without contributing until they decide one way or the other.

N'APA has been in existence for a number of years and recently transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one. Unfortunately there has been an interruption in its existence and only recently has been revived after three years.

#

Missing this time are Sarah Harder, Owen Lorion, Heath Row, and David Speakman. Unfortunately, David Speakman has withdrawn from this apa (though he's still getting a copy, you never know). If any of you know anyone you'd like to see join us, please don't hesitate to try to recruit them. And so has Sarah Harder, waaah! Come back, Little Sheba! (and if you're old enough to remember where this is from, well, heck...

#

Cover artwork or photos are invited from all and any members. (including from icanhazcheeseburger, heh).

Current Membership List

Member Name	First Contribution	Last Contribution	Cumulative Page Count
Sarah E. Harder	N'APA #190	N'APA #207	17* now gone, perhaps to return
Jean Lamb	N'APA #190	N'APA #211	244
Owen Lorion	N'APA #207	N'APA #208	7
Heath Row	N'APA #195	N'APA #205	14
David Speakman	N'APA #191	N'APA #208	46* now gone, perhaps to return
Jon D. Swartz	N'APA #190	N'APA #210	152
Jefferson P. Swycaffer	N'APA #190	N'APA #210	157
R-Laurraine Tutihasi	N'APA #190	N'APA #209	95
Keith Walker	N'APA #191	N'APA #210	75* temporarily absent (we hope)

Table of Contents for N'APA #213

Title Member	Name	Page Count
N'APA Official Organ #213	Jean Lamb	4
Archive Midwinter	Jefferson Swycaffer	4
The E-Ultraverse #209	Jon D. Swartz	4
This Spud's for You #19	Jean Lamb	9
Desert Feline #20	R-Laurraine Tutihasi	3
Page Count Total		24

Rules and Regulations

1. Every other month (January, March, May, July, September, and November), write a fanzine and send it to the Official Editor by midnight of the 15th of the month.
2. At a suggested minimum, submit at least two pages at least every other issue. Of course, more pages every issue are encouraged
3. The contents of your zine are left to your imagination. You can write about your life. You can write about your activities in fandom. You can (in fact are encouraged to) write comments to others regarding their zines from the previous issue. You are also welcome (encouraged!) to include original artwork (including cartoons). Please, do not include material copyrighted by someone else, unless it is brief excerpts or included with permission of the author/copyright holder. It's probably safer to include an article or story done by a friend or relative than something that has been professionally published.
4. The N'APA-zine will be published in PDF format, which will be distributed by email. Eventually, the zine may also be available on a secure web site, where only Neffers can access samples.
5. The Official Editor may make a snail mail version available to those members who cover the postage.
6. The use of pen names, alternate snail mail addresses (perhaps PO Boxes), or e-mail accounts devoted to N3F are suggested but not required. These are to protect you from spam and other nastiness that might be out there. It is possible that copies of the zine could be sent to persons serving time in prisons.
7. N'APA has a cap of 25 participants each mailing, in order to make it easier to read and respond to everyone. This mailing may be sent to persons who are currently serving time in prison, persons who formerly served time in prison, persons who ought to be serving time in prison, persons who may one day serve time in prison, persons who other persons think deserve to be serving time in prison, persons whom Ken Starr is trying to put in prison, persons who once drove a Subaru Impreza past a prison, persons who either once imprisoned a person or impersonated a prison, persons who can be unduly impressed by a prism, persons who are currently serving thyme at Princeton, or Persians who are hurriedly hurling chyme that's risen.*

*I didn't make this up.

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 213
by Jefferson P. Swycaffer
P.O. Box 15373
San Diego CA 92175

(619) 303-1855
abontides@cox.net
jpswycaffer.com

8 January 2012



Happy New Year!

A pretty good holiday season, all considered. Christmas Eve was a bit rough on me, but I got through it. I'd like to say I was visited by three ghosts, who advised me on moral foundations, but, truth to tell, it was just an attack of mental depression, brought about by stress, and made worse by California's foehn, the "Santa Ana" condition.

The Santa Ana winds, sometimes called the "Satana" winds, and for good reason, are hot, dry, and absolutely charged with electricity. You can go to bed at night, and see the light of the electrical discharge as you move your hand over the sheets! These winds, and the accumulation of positive ions, are believed by many (me, for instance!) to cause really nasty stress and depression symptoms.

On the other hand...these winds clear the air marvelously! If you want scenery, go hiking on a Santa Ana afternoon! These are the sorts of days when you can hike up in the Cuyamacas or Lagunas, and see the sea, thirty miles away, with perfect clarity. You can make out the three Coronado Islands; you can see the San Diego city skyline. You can look upon all the lesser hills you've climbed!

Airplane Ridge and Airplane Monument

In 1922, an army airplane went missing, on a flight from San Diego to Yuma. Two men were aboard. Three years later, someone found the wreckage of their plane. They'd tried to circle back toward San Diego, but hit the eastern slopes of Cuyamaca Mountain instead. Their mortal remains were brought back for interment, and the engine of the plane was left up on the ridge as a memorial.





The old aircraft engine, and the view from the monument.

I guess, if one has to die and lie unburied, this is one of the nicer places for it to happen.

The old engine, by the way, is inhabited by a bee hive, and so hiking up to it and paying one's respects is a bit more of an adventure than one might ordinarily imagine!

Five miles of hiking, over fairly well-tended trails and fire-roads, gaining about 1,000 feet and giving it back again. Some heavy Ceanothus brambles.

Ceanothus Palmeri. Not too scratchy, but very tenacious. It grows in criss-crossing networks, interlinked, making self-reinforcing webs

of little branches. Pushing through that stuff is work for a bull moose, not an out-of-shape lit-fan with delusions of woodsy lore!

My papa used to tell about the time he was pushing through some thickets of the stuff, down below Cuyamaca Dam. "How did you get out?" we asked. "Hell, I'm still there!" he would guffaw!

Mailing Comments

Cover: Guffaw! Exactly how I felt!

me: I think we may have solved the green "background color" problem. Hooray for technology! Computers provide us with a never-ending supply of riddles and puzzles, and the joy of it all is when we figure out the answer!

Jon D. Swartz: I have in my reading stack a copy of Maugham's "The Summing Up," but haven't read it yet; I'll have an opinion next ish. Thank you for pointing me to it, however!

One of the many things I was reading, preventing me from getting to "The Summing Up," was "Bengey and the Beast," by Olaf Baker. This was a delightful little "summer fantasy," rather in the tone of "The Wind in the Willows." The animals are a little more naturalistic, and there is a human element, headed by little Bengey, a 12-year-old boy. The cast is plumped up by a handful of forest dwelling humans -- squatters, outcasts, eccentrics -- all wonderfully filled with that endearing British quality of charming insanity. The book appears to have been published in 1947, and yet it perfectly captures the colorful, soft, romantic timelessness of the 'tween wars or pre-war eras.

Robert W. Chambers wrote a long series of "romance novels," mostly set among New York's "upper crust." It's ever so levelling to read about the problems millionaires have! There is a theme of prohibitionism in his books: at least two deal with

alcoholism as a "fate worse than death." He's also fixated on social class and breeding. Not for him are 'tween caste relationships: boys and girls must be of respectable upper-class families, with pedigrees back to Edward the Great. He also has the era's horror of unchaperoned visits between the sexes. In one novel, a girl's reputation is ruined because she stayed up late one night and talked with a boy in the hallway. Oh gasp!

One of his novels, The Crimson Tide, I found to be unreadable. It is set during and after the Bolshevik Revolution, and his anti-communist bias (and his anti-German bias) were simply too glaringly grotesque for me to countenance. In all of his books, he suffers from the bias of physiognomy. Good people are beautiful, and bad people are ugly. Always. In The Crimson Tide, this inanity ascends to a major theme, with endless harping of Lenin's appearance:

"The Red Parliament called him Vladimir Ulianov, and that's what he called himself. He had proved to be reticent, secretive, deceitful, diligent, and utterly unhuman. His lower lip was shaped as though something dripped from it. Blood, perhaps. His eyes were brown and not entirely unattractive. But God makes the eyes; the mouth is fashioned by one's self."

etc. etc. ad nauseam. I couldn't make it to page 100.

In contrast, I admired the deftness of his treatment of the American Civil War, in Ailsa Page. While his sentiments were strongly pro-Union, he allowed a Confederate faithful a major, even pivotal role, and gave her many and many strong speeches in support of her beloved Southern Nation. There was a kind of grace in this, more than mere tokenism. It was, alas, I think the only thing I have ever read of his that made the effort of seeing things from more than one point of view, with any kind of impartiality.

Charles Dana Gibson did, indeed, produce many illustrations for Chambers' stories. The two were good friends, and "The Gibson Girl" is sometimes even known as "The Chambers Girl."

Jean Lamb: Very good -- very ghastly and painful and gripping! -- chapter, focusing on Tonio's slow recovery in secret, and the conspiracies surrounding him. His awakening to the awareness of his new appearance was particularly moving. Definitely an emotional scene, grabbing and engaging the reader. Blunt, ugly in places, but always empathic: your writing makes the reader hurt along with Tonio!

For NaNoWriMo...I did...nothin'. Bugger all not a damn. Didn't write a single dratted word in December, either.

I have an amusing bit of work to do when I do (and I will!) get back to work: I've got a bit of dialogue that is just right to end a chapter with. But it comes at the wrong place, just about mid chapter! So I've either got to trim or to pad!

As an old co-worker of mine, in the accounting department, used to say: "MICOR. Make It Come Out Right!" (This was the sort of accountant who, if the ledgers were off by a few cents, would reach into her purse, pull out a few cents, toss them onto her boss's desk, and say, "Okay, now it balances!" I miss her! You don't find professionals like that these days!)

R-Laurraine Tutihasi: Beautiful photos!

My "Alice in Wonderland" shelf has about thirty books, and also about eleven movies. All jammed together. ("Jam yesterday, and jam tomorrow..." And I jam today, too!) I've got several comic book adaptations of the books, and a really lovely "pop-up" book. Also commentary, including (de rigueur!) "The Annotated Alice." And spoofs and parodies, such as "Alicia in Blunderland," or "Black Alice" by Sladek and Disch.

(This led me to a quandry, and I had to create a "fill in" item, to put in the "Alice" shrine, since "Black Alice" was in my "Sladek" shrine. So I dummied up a book with a fake cover, to look like "Black Alice," and put that in the "Alice" shrine; inside, it says, "Go look in the 'Sladek' shrine!" Yes, I'm the sort of person who uses "HTML" in the physical real world! Of course, as more and more of my books are e-books, this becomes less and less absurd. And, anyway, as a Wonderland fan, a little absurdity is a good thing, is it not?)

re Fred Patten, aye, alas, he is essentially physically and mentally incapacitated. A local fan, Glen Wooten, has been helping sell off Fred's art collection, and has been raising money to help defray Fred's medical costs.

(It is quite daunting to those of us with no medical insurance. The same thing could easily happen to me, or to many other people I know. The economy is awful. And...well...I know it's politically contentious, and many good people would disagree with me, but I, personally, wish that the U.S.A. had a public health care system like that of Britain, Canada, or Australia.)

(I've been pen pals with Craig Hilton, for ages and ages. Aye, he does the "Doc Rat" online comic! I adore him, I love his comics, and I agree with him on the political issue of public health care. But I don't want to drag N'APA down into the level of political debates -- it went that way once, and the results were not pretty -- so, if anyone disagrees, that is, of course, entirely their right. Differences of opinion are the heart and soul of freedom!)

Still unemployed, still hating it... But making the best of my "liberty," by hiking my little hams off! Today, I hit "Mission Trails" again. Did four miles, with some ups-and-downs. 200 feet down, then 400 feet up, then reverse and home again. There were coyotes jaunting about it the canyons below, and one big fluffy lad broke

cover within twenty feet of me, gave me a laugh, and flew off, tail high. I was too slow to get a pic of him!

(The book I referred to earlier, "Bengey and the Beast," centered around such an encounter between a boy and a fox. There is at least some similarity between that scene in the book and my own real-life meeting with a coyote. In both cases, the human is left gaping stupidly while the canid bounces merrily away and is lost to sight, noiselessly, in the cover of the undergrowth. May it always be so!)

(If I were a Briton, I would be one of those campaigning to ban fox hunting. I'm certainly glad that coyotes are protected in these here parts. Fair is fair: they were here first!)

Essay: Morality of Alluding to Other Fiction in Fiction

This is a minor bee in my bonnet. I don't like it when, in fiction, writers allude to other fiction, especially current fiction. I don't like it when, for instance, a detective in a detective novel says, "Yeah, and I'm Superman." I didn't like it when Modesty Blaise wore a "Darth Vader" helmet mask as a disguise. I didn't like it in the recent Thor movie when someone described Sif as "Xena." And I hated the bit in Crimson Tide when the sailors were talking about other submarine movies.

My opinion is that this undermines the integrity of other people's creation. It denies that other character, or book, or movie its place in the reader's suspension of disbelief.

In my own fantasy, I often refer to other fiction. How do I do this without breaking my own rule? Simple: I allude to fictional fiction! I would never have a character say, "What are you supposed to be, Superman?" I'd have them say, "...Victoryman?"

This way, I'm not stepping on anyone's toes...

DESERT FELINE #23

Desert Feline #23 is a zine created for N'APA #213, January 2012, by R-Laurraine Tutihasi of Oracle, AZ, who can be reached at Laurraine@mac.com or 520-896-2058. I have a web site at <http://www.weasner.com/>. © 2012 by R-Laurraine Tutihasi except as noted. This zine is formatted for viewing on screen. Photo p. 1 by Mike Weasner. Started 11 December 2011, finished 2 January 2012.

Since my last zine, we've had a third snowfall this season. The cold weather lasted for several nights. (See photo centre of snow-lit scene with Orion above.) In addition we've had quite a bit of rain, which is good. Mike is not very happy, though, with the scarcity of clear nights. We've also had a few roof leaks. We thought they were fixed, but it leaked again with the latest rain.

I added *Kung Fu Panda: Legends of Awesomeness* and *Prophets of Science Fiction* to my TV viewing. The holiday hiatus is on now, so I'm catching up a bit with all the stuff recorded on my DVR. I deleted some stuff I was never going to watch too.

The November selection for the sf book club was Jack Campbell's *The Lost Fleet: Beyond the Frontier: Dreadnaught*. Reactions were mixed, which made for a pretty good discussion. There was no meeting in



December.

We've attended an opera and a musical. The opera was Gounod's *Faust*, done in modern garb. It worked until the last act, which was split up into three scenes, completely breaking up the mood. The musical was *Daddy Long Legs*; I liked it a lot, though it was a tearjerker for me. It inspired me to reread the book and watch the old Fred Astaire movie. I'm told there were other versions filmed, so I'll have to find them.

We managed to get all the daffodil bulbs into the ground but are still waiting for the replacement persimmon trees.

Mercury (see photo p. 3) had a minor problem with a growth about the size of a small grape right under where his left armpit would be. It was removed and a biopsy done; it was benign. We're relieved.

I recently developed an allergy to one of my allergy medications, Singulair.

Mailing Comments on N'APA 212

Jean Lamb (N'APA Official Organ #212): The issue number of my zine in the Table of Contents is incorrect. It was probably incorrect in the previously mailing as well, and I just didn't notice.

Jefferson P. Swycaffer (Archive Midwinter): I was taught the ins and outs of using a library in high school.

Many people who are suddenly and unexpectedly given a lot of money have no idea what to do.

I'm sorry to hear of your hiking accident but happy that it was no worse. The thing about concussions is that they can have far-reaching effects you won't know about until more

time has passed. Your memory may be affected.

I'm sorry to hear of the problems with the World Fantasy Convention, especially the fact that you missed all of it. From reports I've had from a few attendees, at least some people had a great time.

Jon D. Swartz (The E-Ultraverse #212): Mildred Clingerman's name is familiar to me. I must have read some of her stories in various anthologies.

Jean Lamb (This Spud's for You #22): This is the best chapter yet.

* * * * *

In mid-November we attended one day of Tuscon. This year we were able to stay for all of Saturday; so we did some evening things, most notably a birthday party for two of our friends. We didn't do any Regency dancing, because Mike was having problems with one of his feet. He eventually traced the problem to his broken recliner that he hadn't replaced yet. After he figured out the problem, we went shopping for a replacement and found a real bargain. At the same store, I found two dining room chairs that will do to add two extra seats for our dining room table.

Most of the programming we attended at Tuscon was related

to astronomy and the space programme. I attended one reading by a local author, Emma Bull. We really should try to get together with her and Will Shetterley socially outside of conventions—something to put on the back burner. I also attended the very short masquerade.

I got some really bad news recently when I heard that Bob Sabella, long time member of FAPA and its OE for the last year or so, had died of a brain tumour. It was so sudden. Of course, FAPA was also in a bit of a quandary for a while until a new OE stepped up to volunteer. I had never met him in person and was hoping to do so next year, but I guess that



wasn't meant to be.

In other, less dramatic, news, I replaced my regular trifocals with lines with a pair of progressives; the lines were starting to drive me nuts.

My iPhone battery started dying about mid-December. Fortunately it was still under Apple Care, and I got a replacement iPhone.

We went to the movies, I think for the second time in 2011. Just before Xmas we saw *Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol*. I thought it was the best of the franchise. It's all action throughout.

Laurraine

THE E-ULTRAVERSE #213

by
Jon D. Swartz

TO ALL -- I hate to see us down to only four active members, although I have to admit the quantity being produced by the four is more than adequate.

JEFFERSON P. SWYCAFFER – I couldn't agree more with your “How to learn” comments. The longer I taught at the college level, the more I came to realize that a good college education consisted mostly of knowing how to find out things, rather than information per se. We wouldn't think a person truly educated if s/he didn't speak, write, etc. like a learned person, but many facts are forgotten over time -- while the ability to discover things, solve problems, etc. is always with us. I also made certain that all my students wrote at least one research paper and gave at least one talk before the class.

You're on a Robert W. Chambers jag, are you? It's a small world. Chambers is the subject of one of my future articles for my monthly print fanzine, *The Ultraverse*. He was quite a guy! H. P. Lovecraft was a great admirer of his *The King in Yellow* (which I just finished reading). I haven't designated him as a “neglected genre author,” but I'll share my article on him with the N'APA membership if there's any interest in my doing so.

I ENJOYED YOUR “SHORT BIT” FROM *PAINTERROR*. AT ONE TIME I COLLECTED BOOKS ABOUT NELSON, WELLINGTON, AND THE NAPOLEONIC WARS.

JEAN LAMB – Thanks for sharing the chapter from your *Dead Man's Hand*. I haven't gotten around to reading it yet, but look forward to doing so – as well as other chapters I hope you provide in the future.

R-LAURRAINE TUTIHASI – My dental work proceeds also. I've paid about half of my bill so far, but still have about \$1,500.00 to go. Oh, for the days when I had dental insurance.

You and Mike seem to have a very active social life. I envy you.

It seems I remember Fred Patten from way back when. Wasn't he a friend of

Jerry Bails? And didn't he dress up as The Flash at a comic book con?

TO ALL: Here's my twentieth “Neglected Genre Author” article, originally published in my print fanzine, *The Ultraverse*, dated December, 2011.

“NEGLECTED GENRE AUTHOR #20: WILLIAM GRAY BEYER”

VERY LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT BEYER, INCLUDING HIS VITAL STATISTICS. I WASN'T EVEN ABLE TO FIND A PHOTOGRAPH OF HIM. WHAT I WAS ABLE TO VERIFY ABOUT HIS LIFE AND CAREER, HOWEVER, IS PRESENTED HERE.

BEYER WORKED HIS WAY THROUGH THE DREXEL INSTITUTE (NOW DREXEL UNIVERSITY) IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA BY SELLING RADIO RECEIVERS. HE SUBSEQUENTLY WORKED AT MANY OTHER JOBS INCLUDING TAXI DRIVING, SALES, RAILROADING, AND POLICE WORK. AT ONE TIME HE WAS CAPTAIN OF THE PHILADELPHIA POLICE RADIO AND COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT.

HE WAS ACTIVE AS A WRITER FROM 1939 TO 1951, AND HIS STORIES APPEARED IN THE PULP MAGAZINES OF THAT PERIOD, PRINCIPALLY *ARGOSY MAGAZINE*. HIS SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL, *MINIONS OF THE MOON: A NOVEL OF THE FUTURE*, ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN *ARGOSY*, AND WAS PUBLISHED IN BOOK FORM BY GNOME PRESS IN 1950 -- WITH DUST JACKET ART BY EDD CARTIER.

BEYER ALSO SIGNED HIS WORK WILLIAM BEYER, BILL BEYER, AND WM. GRAY BEYER. AT LEAST ONE REFERENCE SOURCE LISTS HIM AS WILLIAM GREY BEYER, BUT THIS SPELLING OF GRAY IS UNDOUBTEDLY A MISPRINT.

Novel-Length Stories Published in *Argosy Magazine*

***Minions of the Moon* (1939)**

***Minions of Mars* (1940)**

***MINIONS OF MERCURY* (1940)**

***Minions of the Shadow* (1941)**

***DEATH OF A PUPPETEER* (1946)**

***Murder by Arrangement* (1948) [aka *Eenie, Meenie, Minie -- Murder!*]**

***The Deadly Thinkers* (1951)**

PUBLISHED BOOKS

MURDER SECRETARY (BART HOUSE, 1946) [PAPERBACK REPRINT OF *EENIE, MEENIE, MINIE – MURDER!* -- ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN 1945]

DEATH OF A PUPPETEER (MYSTERY HOUSE, 1946) [REPRINTED BY WILDSIDE PRESS, 2008]

Murder by Arrangement (Partridge, 1948) [British/Australian title of *Eenie, Meenie, Minie -- Murder!*]

MINIONS OF THE MOON: A NOVEL OF THE FUTURE (GNOME PRESS, 1950) [DUST JACKET BY EDD CARTIER]

Minions of the Shadow: and the Other Mark Nevin-Omega novels (Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, 2003)

SHORT GENRE FICTION

“LET EM' EAT SPACE” IN *ARGOSY MAGAZINE* (NOVEMBER 4, 1939)

“Atonement” in *Thrilling Adventures* (November, 1942)

“The Deadly Thinkers” in *Science Fiction Quarterly* (May, 1951)

Genre Stories Reprinted in Magazines

“Minions of the Moon” in *Two Complete Science Fiction Adventures* (Summer, 1952)

“Let Em' Eat Space” in *Fantastic* (February, 1963)

Some Concluding Comments

Beyer is almost completely forgotten today, with only his *Minions of the Moon* ever mentioned in the genre literature. At one time, however, his stories were very popular – especially the ones that ran as serials in *Argosy*.

Despite his background in police work, his mysteries were not especially well done – even given the standards of the pulps at the time when they were first published.

His science fiction novels, on the other hand, were fast-paced and had a certain appeal. It's easy to see why they were popular with science fiction fans when they were first published as serials in *Argosy*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CLUTE, JOHN & PETER NICHOLLS (EDS.). *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION*. LONDON: ORBIT, 1993.

Parnell, Frank H. *Monthly Terrors*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985.

Tuck, Donald H. *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy, Volume One, Who's Who, A to L*. Chicago, IL: Advent, 1974.

Tymn, Marshall B. (ed.). *American Fantasy and Science Fiction*. West Linn, OR: FAX Collector's Editions, 1979.

JON D. SWARTZ

N'APA # 213

JANUARY 15, 2012

THIS SPUD'S FOR YOU #23

Jean Lamb 4846 Derby Place Klamath Falls, OR 97603, (541) 882-1635 , email
tlambs1138@charter.net

NATTER: I finished and won NaNoWriMo this year! 51,345 words, not that I'm counting <G>. A BRILLIANT MARRIAGE actually got to the finish line on November 27th, at about 1:25 in the afternoon. It felt weird to not be writing on it, actually. Anyway, it's a Regency romance. First line is, "Bloody hell. I'm a duke." Last line is: "Oh, the honeymoon? It was brilliant, too."

And the workload at work is manageable right now, which means, of course, that they're going to change around procedures to make it all more complicated—which means that we'll all be totally overwhelmed by summer when the workload is horrendous. But it will be our fault for not working hard enough when we ask for overtime pay.

The family is its usual self. But the big news is that Adam has asked Cathy to marry him. He proposed on Christmas evening, and Cathy is wearing his great-grandmother's ring. No date has been set, since Cathy is still in the first year of her doctoral program and only occasionally sees the sun, even though they live in Florida.

MAILING COMMENTS, NAPA #211

Archive Midwinter for Napa #211 (Jefferson P. Swycaffer): I'm glad that you finally figured out how to send your zine so your nice green background actually works. Thanks!

I agree that the right to die should be hedged with qualifiers and requirements; there are relatives who can't wait for others to die (especially if there is money involved). Some of the inheritance changes make you wonder how many older people were ah, encouraged or otherwise to pass on so their heirs would get the most amount of money. Also, some doctors do take matters into their own hands and have some very *interesting* ideas regarding quality of life (The Netherlands, I'm looking at you).

I'm sorry to hear about Fred Patten. He was always very decent to me, and clued me in some of the bizarreness going on at ConFrancisco in 1993 (let us just say that one deceased author was incredibly fond of pre-emptive threats to sue to get their way, and the con-committee was not amused, but were stuck, and Fred kind of let me know why some panels were the way they were. Granted, it was fun to sit next to David Kyle on the First Fandom Panel, and passing myself off as the Token Newbie got me through it—plus, I've read all the classic stuff, so I wasn't lost at all. It's been fun, being the child of an SF collector...).

Also, there was a very charming bit in one of the Lindsay Davis Falco novels, SATURNALIA, I think, where apparently some people liked to have 'nymphs and satyrs' parties that sound an awful lot like Very Early Furry Fandom <G>. I do hope Fred read that and smiled.

As for 'decimate' I have a bunch of papers on my desk that I wouldn't mind doing that to, actually. But the building fire marshal has no sense of humor.

Glad you're enjoying DEAD MAN'S HAND. There will be another chapter this issue, of course. I really enjoyed writing Tonio, as you can probably tell. And he is an extremely sensual person, so he would notice all that stuff.

Yes, indeed—Project Gutenberg, aka the Mother Ship.

And “The King in Yellow” was quite...different. I liked the one about the guy who turned people into statues (used the metaphoric possibility to have fun torturing a character in fanfic, heh. And stole Robert E. Lee’s West Point nickname “The Marble Model” for him, too.)

You know, you’re quite right about Talbot Mundy. I grew up reading the Tros of Samothrace books, and they were stupendous when I was younger, but now I look at them, and wonder, ‘hello, PLOT?’ Tros spends a lot of time thinking about the reactions of others when he really should be moving forward a bit more (Frank Herbert is just as bad in the later DUNE books, though Kevin Anderson/Brian Herbert could do with a bit more of it).

I found your poem to be rather interesting, especially the message conveyed in those fancy capital letters. Quite wicked, really. Snicker.

The E-Ultraverse #211 (Jon D. Swartz): Mary Elizabeth Couselman sounds like an absolutely delightful person who had an absolutely delightful life. Do remind me to find a time machine and shotgun and rescue her works from her son (I also plan to rescue my dad’s early collection, which was burnt by his father).

DESERT FELINE #21 (R-Laurraine Tutihasi): Lovely picture, as ever. Hope the exercising is still working out for you. I just need to do more of it myself.

As for an iPad, there was a nice, cheap Android tablet on sale locally, but the price went up twice in the weeks just before Christmas. I’m going to watch that store’s ads and see if they’ll sell it again at the cheaper price. Several hundred dollars is just too much for me.

I do love my Kindle, except when the screen freezes up and it basically dies, sigh. But I’m supposed to get a replacement this week and send the old one back.

I am glad to hear you are feeling better, and hope you have stayed that way.

MAILING COMMENTS FOR NAPA #212

Cover: I am really feeling much better now. Honest. <G>

ARCHIVE MIDWINTER (Jefferson Swycaffer): With the new format you’re sending me, you get your green background again, yay!

What did you give up target shooting again? It doesn’t cost that much to set up a BB gun range, and I understand from my husband that blowing away innocent paper targets is very soothing (he spent a good part of his adolescence that way, and everyone was happy. He still shoots a pistol/revolver the sideways stance with one hand, the way that Efrem Zimbalist Jr. used to, but the last time he did he scored rather high, and the sergeant who had laughed at him became *very* quiet).

How is the writing from an outline going? I had a basic one for my NaNoWriMo (*A Brilliant Marriage*) and it turned out rather well. But then, I knew my last line, and if I know my last line, even my last-second improvisations and Better Ideas end up headed towards the finish line and sometimes better than I thought the first time around.

Oh, dear. Gold futures have sucked in and devoured better people than your friend, I fear. That’s why I paper-traded till I suddenly realized I sucked vacuum at it, and that throwing real money at it Would Not Help.

Of course I’m chasing y’all up a tree and setting fire to it. Isn’t that what writers do?

I like the idea of inter-relating things. The fun part is that Gambrell, and another character in a different series, end up interacting somewhat. I have a spreadsheet that reminds me what age each of

them are at and what stage in their journey each one is, so when they do interact I have some clue exactly where each one is when they do. Ok, that sounds complicated. But see...ok, no spoilers, you'll just have to wait till I write it. So there.

My condolences about the convention. The worst convention I was ever at was Nolacon 88, aka DisasterCon for rather a lot of other people, too, but I had stomach problems and could hardly eat—when people were buying me *real* French onion soup and I couldn't eat it! In New Orleans! (turned out to be an allergy to a shampoo, which I will never, EVER use again).

Not surprised at Wolverine and Cyclops splitting up like that; you could tell just from one of the movies that they had both sets of eyes on Jean Grey, and that they were never going to be buds over it, either.

“Painterror”—you have my attention. Weyland has more problems than just his boss being ticked at him, too. Brrr.....

THE E-UNIVERSE #212 (Jon D. Swartz): I decided not to have the sinus surgery, and I think it was a good idea. One of my co-workers had similar surgery, and still has problems. Plus, the doctor I went to didn't try me on antihistamines first before wanting to go in there. Perhaps he assumed that I had already tried them all, but he was wrong. Once I found one that I can take occasionally to resolve nighttime breathing problems, I'm usually all right (but I can take it only occasionally; urinary retention is no fun, especially after one has drunk a beer). So I just rinse things out and take the antihistamine, and upped my vitamin C, since that appears to change the nature of the mucus so that it is more easily expelled. Sorry, more detail than you wanted, probably...

Thanks for the information on Mildred Clingermann. It is odd that she has been so neglected, really. Thank you for bringing her to life.

Desert Feline #22 (R-Laurraine Tutihasi): I wish we had some rain here. We've had very little moisture of any kind this year; it's all been shoved north and south of us. No thanks to you, La Nina, though last year we had some very good moisture. Farmer's Almanac lied to us!

I enjoyed THE HUNGER GAME very much, even if you could run the Millenium Falcon through the worldbuilding. Katniss is such a strong character, it doesn't really matter that much. (Cage match between her and Lisbeth Salander from THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO! I get to run the betting book).

We have a spare refrigerator out in the shop—it certainly has made Thanksgiving and Christmas easier, since all the leftovers go out there. It also holds the cheese I bought a year or so ago and left in there for extra sharpening (buy extra sharp cheese, date with a silver Sharpie, then leave it to sit for another year or so, and then it will be Really Good).

I just have to use Claritin on an occasional basis, not all the time, and I'm ok (major side effect listed above).

Chapter 6 of DEAD MAN'S HAND is next!

Chapter 6

Harin trudged wearily up the path to the Grove of Siranna, where the most ancient trees on the estate were kept as a shrine. His father's estate held no such thicket; but then, the della Roveres had never been mistaken for a Great House, either.

His feet hurt. He'd begun walking from the Della Rovere house at sunset after fasting all day, and had taken off his shoes the moment he was certain he was on Siranna land. If he was going to be properly accepted as the new Master after all he'd done, he had best show as much humility as he

could.

He shuddered. Late last night, he'd finally paid his respect to the *mori-donni* Vitor, only to find her dead. He'd been so ashamed of his neglect that he could hardly bear to look at the old man who'd been caring for her all this time. This morning he'd learned that the place had burned nearly to the ground. Both Colinna and the *mori-donni* were gone, without even bones left behind to show they'd existed. When Harin had ordered the bravos his father-in-law had thrust upon him as part of Alaqui's dowry to confess their crimes, they had only laughed and swore they knew nothing about any of it. He knew they were lying.

It was time to become the real Master of Siranna, not just Uri's puppet. No wonder he had yet to hear from any of the ghosts from the Vitor family, though rumors of spectral voices near the ruined manor frightened the workers who were supposed to clear the wreckage away. Harin's pace became slower as he got closer. Did he really want to hear what old Sandro had to say to his successor?

Then again, who had more right to be vengeful after death? Tonio's father had always been angry in life--why should he be different now? Harin just prayed to be spared seeing the shade of his friend asking him *why*. Old Delcoros' ghostcaller had screamed and fainted when asked to find out if Tonio was dead. He'd seen the flames for himself. Even Uri had gone pale.

Harin kept going, though it was nearly midnight and he had yet to break his fast this day. He'd put these events in motion, or at least taken advantage of his failure to warn the Vitors. And he'd made things worse by refusing Maytera Montegardo and marrying Alaqui Delcoros instead. Not that he hated his new wife; she was so soft-spoken one could barely hear her, and was obviously ready to worship at his feet for having taken her from Terferan. She knew nothing of running a household, but her advice and guesses as to her father's mind would pay for a dozen cooks and cleaners over the years. Oh, she was still frightened of going outside the few cloistered rooms he'd set aside for her, but she'd get over that.

He smiled. He felt like a prince making love to her. Had he not rescued her from an ogre? She'd known so little of what went on between men and women that he'd felt obliged to explain what he wanted instead of just bedding her. At first she'd been afraid, especially when he had hurt her without meaning to--but now she welcomed him. Why, she'd even whispered in his ear a few nights ago something of what *she* wanted him to do! She still thought it odd that they slept in the same bed, which told Harin all he wanted to know about the Delcoros household, but they were both becoming pleasantly used to each other.

Ah, the soft cushions of her flesh! But his mood turned bleak as he walked closer to the Grove of Siranna. *How much of my joy in her is knowing that Tonio will never charm her away from me?* He'd seen the sparks fly between the Montegardo girl and his cousin, despite the way they'd told him later in private, separately, how much each despised the other. Tonio had loved his brother enough to exile himself over Luifa; but would he have been so careful of a mere cousin, and one of lower rank besides?

If only things had worked out the way he'd planned. Now he was bound to the Delcoros clan, and of his own free choice at that. *I must remember to be grateful to Avdan,* Harin thought. *Alaqui told me that it was all his idea.* At least the youngest son of his new family seemed to have no ambitions beyond staying alive.

I wonder what happened to his left hand. He was hiding it all the time I saw him at Terferan, Harin thought. *I remember he was using it to paint that time I saw him in Argnon. Too bad if he's hurt it.* He recalled telling Avdan while both of them were still in the foreign city, "I can't believe you're so afraid of your father that you'll try to kill my friend just to please him."

Delcoros' youngest son had shook his head, and said, "You don't understand."

Harin could believe anything of Uri Delcoros now. He stopped and yawned. A pity he hadn't brought any blackbean tea with him to drink before he fell asleep on his feet! Then he grimaced with

grief, remembering the cup he'd brought Tonio when he'd won that big bet in Argnon. *Maybe Avdan got hurt for losing that bet.* He wouldn't put anything past the old man.

What will my punishment be? he wondered. One always paid for evil, in this life or when facing the Prophet after death. He hoped his sacrifice now would lessen the one to come.

Damn! He should have taken the *mori-donni* into his house no matter what the old woman had said. He'd rather have a dozen bumps on his head than the sorrow that weighed on his heart now. She deserved proper burial in the family crypt, not this obscenity! *No doubt the old farmer died for the sake of the few gold coins I left behind for him,* Harin thought bleakly.

And it was all his fault. His breath came quickly as he trudged up the steep slope that led to the Grove crowning the hill within sight of the ruined house. By the Deathlord, his feet hurt. That was a small price for his treachery. Harin knew he might be risking his life going into the Grove, but he doubted it. Surely the ancient trees wouldn't leave Siranna naked to the Delcoros family! Who else was there but him to protect this land from the looters?

All his life he'd loved this place. The della Rovere estate was so small, so poorly cared for in comparison. Father loved gambling more than he did the land, and Harin had long given up hope of being able to do much with the client-farms when anything extra went to the gaming tables. Siranna always seemed so marvelous by comparison. For all of old Sandro's ambition within the Congregation, he never made the land suffer for it. Harin had to admit to himself that Anderay would have made the perfect successor if he'd lived. Yet Vitor's oldest son had taken it all for granted.

Harin stopped for a moment and wiped his forehead. It had been so easy to nod and agree to say nothing when he'd first heard of the plan. Sandro and Anderay removed, Tonio persuaded to use his gifts against Argnon for the sake of Cuda, and he himself as steward to Siranna, and Master in all but name. After all, everyone knew that Tonio loved the sea like a mistress. *I would have seen to it the women and children did not lose by it,* Harin thought, *and Issola would have been my bride.* His heart ached with grief. *The old woman would have seen reason, and Father would have made sure his sister Alessa was taken care of.*

Harin whispered to himself. "I tried so hard to keep you alive, Tonio. I swear I did. Why do you think I had you drink so much that night? I know I was jealous of you, but once I was married to your sister it wouldn't have mattered any more." And if everything had worked out properly, his cousin could have had Luifa for himself.

But it had all gone wrong. Avdan had made it clear that the women were meant to die. If they hadn't perished in the fire, Delcoros' man had been waiting for them. Only luck had kept the *mori-donni* alive to designate him as heir.

Harin began walking towards the trees again. Perhaps the Congregation needed at least one voice strong enough to oppose Uri Delcoros. Well, the Grove would have to give him the wisdom to stay alive without being swallowed up first. Surely the evil old man couldn't live forever. He didn't know much about Lucan, the oldest son--Avdan would never talk about him--but surely no one could equal Uri's poisonous force.

The Grove's trees were so closely woven that no one could enter without the spirits inside opening the way. Harin lit a small lamp that he'd brought with him so he could lay out his offerings properly. It must be nearly midnight now. He peered down and noticed footprints so small and narrow that at first he thought a child had been up here. Then he realized who it had been. *I honor you for your courage, old woman,* he thought. *Too bad you were refused.* The Grove was for men only, or for a woman carrying a son, but that wouldn't have stopped the *mori-donni* from trying to enter.

Harin knelt and spread out a small white cloth. On it he arranged a cup of wine, a knife, a small handful of mintas taken from the oldest tree in the Siranna orchard, and a clod of earth from the pathway where he'd walked barefooted and bled. He was glad to kneel, considering how the bottoms of

his feet stung.

Then he blew out the lamp and waited. If he failed this time, he would come once a month for the rest of his life if he had to. The Grove would find out just how determined he could be.

He waited, and nearly dozed. The sky was growing lighter. Once it was dawn he'd return home, but he'd be back, again and again, if he needed to. Siranna deserved better than to be swallowed whole by the Delcoros clan, which he could see coming if he didn't have the strength to stop it.

SO, YOU INTEND TO WEAR US DOWN WITH STUBBORNNESS?

Harin's head ached from the sound of the booming voice. "If I must. It's all I have."

ENTER. A hole in the thicket gaped open. He got up and walked through it. His heart pounded. Harin blindly followed the path that his bare feet found. The soft, cool dust was a boon to their wounds.

Then he saw the light, a soft, gray-green the color of ripe mintas. Once he got closer to it, he knelt again. "What would you have of me?"

WHAT WOULD YOU GIVE, TRAITOR?

"My life, if you would have it. I would give you all the years of it I have left in service to Siranna."

STRANGE WORDS FROM SOMEONE WHO ALLOWED HIS KIN TO DIE.

"I could give you reasons. But they don't really matter, do they?" He bowed his head, wracked with guilt. "I'm a foul beast who doesn't deserve to live! But I still don't want Siranna to be destroyed by the Delcoros family. I don't think you do, either." He took several deep breaths. "I need the strength to keep Siranna alive, and the wit to do so without being destroyed. Look at how brave Sandro Vitor was, and what happened to him."

Everything paused. Harin didn't dare to speak again until he knew what the Grove would decide. He suddenly became aware that the branches were closer to him than before. Would he truly be allowed to leave here alive? Or was this a more foolish gamble than any his father made?

A breeze blew into his face, as if the trees themselves had sighed. Harin dared to hope that his sacrifice was not in vain.

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED SINCE SIRANNA LAST PASSED TO NEW HANDS. WHO IS OUR ENEMY?

Harin took a deep breath of relief. "Some say it is Argnon. They haven't forgotten what we did to them. But I say our real foe is the Empire of Mintar and those who follow them. They're buying and slaving their way north, and Uri Delcoros wants to be on the winning side. Their ships are in our harbors, landing in the harbors of the islands of Pelago, and even in Argnon. Only the Tyrant, in the name of Allante, bans them altogether. But how can we ally ourselves with *them*?"

WHEN BROTHERS FIGHT, THEY RAGE HARDER THAN ANY OTHER FOES. OR COUSINS. ANGER KEEPS YOU FROM SEEING HOW CLOSE IN BLOOD YOU REALLY ARE. MANY GREAT HOUSES HAVE FOREIGN BLOOD, AND THE LINE OF VITOR IS NO EXCEPTION.

Harin had never thought of that. The small clan of Della Rovere had no such entanglements that he knew; yet if he'd married Issola, he wouldn't have cared about any of hers. And his wife now...who knew what blood she bore? The House of Delcoros had rarely been allowed to take brides from other noble lines.

"Is that what I must do?" Harin asked. "Uri Delcoros had me convinced that he was right, after I learned that old Vitor was plotting to ally himself with Argnon." He'd had a hard time believing the rumor about the Duke's eldest daughter, especially with Tonio so much in love with Luifa, but it was the only thing that made sense after seeing the special treatment his cousin had received there. "But I can't follow Delcoros now. At least not in my heart." Especially once he'd learned from Avdan that even the children were to be murdered if they'd survived the fire. "I can't work against them openly. I

need your help!"

Harin suddenly felt his hands trapped by branches that wrapped themselves against his wrists. *Oh, Death-Lord. I shouldn't have said so much. Now the Grove knows how worthless I am.* But then, he knew that for himself.

LOOK INTO THE LIGHT, AND KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.

He leaned forward, still on his knees, till the branches were supporting most of his weight, and did what he was told.

Suddenly he was sitting in the dining room of a manor house that no longer existed, gazing at a table full of happy family members.

His ears echoed with screaming, and everyone looked to *him* to save them all. As Sandro Vitor, he died swiftly with a Mintaran arrow in his chest.

As Anderay, he lived a little longer. He picked up a chair and swung it around to give the women time to run. But the blade of a raider through his neck put an end to him.

Issola gasped for air and quietly perished, still trying to comfort the two small children in her lap.

As a small baby boy, he huddled with his face in his sister's skirt. His tiny lungs struggled for air till they no longer worked. The death of his slightly older sister was much the same.

As Lady Alessa, he tried desperately to pull her daughter-in-law to the crypt, but fell to the floor instead as air too hot to breathe paralyzed his chest.

As Luifa, his body contorted in agony as the child inside tried to be born.

As an infant struggling out of the darkness, he drowned in blood.

Harin suddenly came back to himself, and found himself crying in pain, his face in the dust.

"Please, no more..." he gasped. Not Tonio. Not the *mori-donni*. He didn't want to feel their deaths.

YOU MUST ENDURE THEM ALL.

Then he was his cousin, nearly mad with grief and rage as he held his beloved's bleeding body, trying desperately to dodge the flames that spouted from a cellar full of mint oil, trapped by pieces of the ceiling falling from above--

Harin screamed. Only the branches wrapped around his wrists kept him from bolting away.

And then, and then, he was a frail old woman whose fluttering heart slowly and finally, failed to keep beating when all warmth and hope drained from her soul, with the face of death as her only companion.

Harin found his wrists free as he panted for breath. He lay on his back now, looking at the sky above him. Stars in a night-black sky glittered through a gap in the leaves of the Grove.

STAND UP.

He struggled to his feet. Part of him wanted to turn away and keep on running till he was back home again. *No*, he thought. *I've come this far*. He staggered even closer to the still-glowing light.

"You won't be rid of me that easily," he gasped.

PLUNGE YOUR HANDS INTO THE THORNS ABOVE THE LIGHT. IF YOU WOULD BE OUR MASTER, YOU MUST TRUST US.

Harin almost changed his mind. Hadn't he suffered enough? Then he grew angry. "Here I am. If you want me, take me!" He howled in pain as the sharp barbs of the branches crawled up both forearms and seemed to *feed* on him.

Suddenly they let him go, and he almost fell.

He glared into the light and said, "What other torture do you have waiting for me? I'm not going to give up. I love Siranna. I need your help to keep it from the Delcoros clan. I want to stay alive. Well?"

His eyes widened as a miniature vision of the *mori-donni's* wrinkled face appeared in the green

light.

*Hmmp. I'm glad there are more ancestors here besides me. I gave my grandson Sandro a lot of advice and he listened to most of it. See where that got him! So you won't see me very often. Try not to be too cheerful over *that*. Are you serious about keeping Siranna away from the Delcoros clan?*

"Of course I am!"

Then why on earth did you marry one of their daughters? If you become Master of Siranna, you can't have any of your children by her as your own heir.

Harin shuddered. He'd never thought of that. "We're all cousins of one sort or another by now," he argued back. "And I'm more of a Vitor by blood than you are!"

She laughed. *You've got more spirit than I gave you credit for. I'll have to admit that you'll make a better Master than I thought. But you still owe us a debt, and it will be collected someday. Never forget that, or you'll wish you'd remembered. Teach your children about that debt, for its payment may come in their time, not yours. Never forget your own Vitor blood, even if you have to play the rabbit to survive. And don't underestimate the Delcoros clan! Even the members you think are your friends will still be Delcoros first.*

"I swear--no, I've already proven faithless," Harin said. "But may the Grove destroy me if I fail."

Good. Since it will anyway, it's nice you realize it.

"What--what do I do now?"

Go back home to your wife. Let her fuss over the scars, and try to act mysterious. Then order those horrible bravos away. This time they'll listen.

"I hear and obey," he said, then bowed. Then he saw morning light filter through the leaves of the trees, while the gray-green glow at its heart began to fade.

Harin plodded home on foot, weary from the agony of all those deaths he'd been made to feel, but refused a cart ride from one of the local peasants who had ignored him on the way here. *Amazing. He seems in awe of me, even though I must look like an unwashed brigand.*

Once he got home, Alaqi did fuss over him--why, she even pushed her way past his mother! But the scars that were carved all the way up to his elbows were already healed, though his feet were still sore.

Alaqi was the first to notice it. "Your arms are like those of the last Master of Siranna as they were described to me and my sisters," she said in a hushed voice, then sank to her knees. "Command me, lord. For I am of your family now, not that of my House."

His own father knelt then, as did his mother. Harin savored it just a moment, but sobered as he remembered the price--not all of which had yet been paid. He bent down and raised all of them up. "Stand tall, for you are my kin. You belong to the family of the Master of Siranna, and thus you deserve respect as well. Do not bow or kneel, save when you feel you must. For that is also the custom of Siranna, that all who are blood or bonded there may walk and speak freely."

It felt right to continue the tradition of the line of Vitor. All of them were strengthened by standing together like this. To take what was best from the past while building something that would stand in the future, no matter what harsh winds might blow--that, *that*, was what it meant to be Master of Siranna.

