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Issue Sei - June 2010

## Musings from Under the Mountain

Ah... The rain has stopped, the sky is blue, and the sun is streaming in the window—it must be our son Paul’s birthday. No, it really is Paul’s birthday—about half an hour ago, twelve years ago as I write this, the surgeon drew him forth from my belly... a mewling, premature, tiny, but healthy baby boy. I remember his first, surprising lusty, cry, bright blue eyes—and the all-over blond fur—almost as if it was yesterday. Yes, babies born ten weeks early do have this fine downy fur all over them. This is called lanugo—and we all had it, just most of us lost it before we were born.

Of course, he’s much bigger now, a big fan of “Doctor Who” - preferably watched on the couch beside Mum, especially if it’s a scary one. The BBC are apparently not afraid to frighten children—there is a tradition to be observed, usually involving the program being watched from behind the couch, rather than on it. None of us are sure what to make of the eleventh Doctor. David Tennant was a tough act to follow, and the new chap hasn’t quite hit the spot yet. It didn’t help that they apparently changed the production team as well, and I have found the scripts a bit... well, silly, in places. Of course, it’s hard to get sillier than some of the earlier Doctor Who scripts—flying the Earth back home, anyone? But Spitfires in Space? Come on, guys! Though I can see the point—if someone’s intention is to take the mickey out of all those space battles that look like World War II dog-fights.

Speaking of matters frightening, most of you will know by now that your editor has little time for vamping vampires—they’re monsters, right—and you kill them, right! They’re not sex-mad angst-ridden lost souls... And then I happen to see a documentary on Prime where a young man in Scotland became obsessed with the “Queen of the Damned” (apparently a terminally dire movie by all accounts). He started to hear the voice of the Vampire Queen Akasha talking to him, and ended up killing his best friend when the latter made disparaging remarks about her. He then proceeded to drink the murdered boy’s blood in the belief that he’d become a vampire. I kid you not—this really happened. You really have to wonder. I mean, yes, the lad was as nutty as a Scottish oatcake, but... Somebody hand me that Holy Symbol... yes, that one, and the garlic, and the bottled sunlight, and the Holy Water! I don’t know what’s scarier, the myth or the reality...

Jacqui

## From the Cramped Office

You know, I promised the Editor, the glorious Jacqui Smith, that this column would be in her in-box by 10pm Friday the week before the meeting. It is now Tuesday, and is (was) tomorrow. Some would accuse me of procrastination, which is sort of right – I’d had two essays totaling 5000 words due for university in two weeks. Next semester doesn’t get any better – three 5000 word essays plus the dissertation all due about the same time. I’d better get started. Not that this is club related, but you see how private stuff can creep in.

Any way, It gives me great happiness to introduce this month’s subject: ... Prompt! No, it is not the FIFA world cup. I’m sure the meeting will be a blast, if only I could remember what it is we’re doing. In the meantime, I’ll enjoy my DVD collection and having a brief respite from composing essays for university. If anybody has any brilliant idea as to what they want the club to do, suggest it to a crew member. In the worst instance, you will die recreating that grand scene. Second worst, we’ll say yes, but won’t involve you, and third worst we’ll say “no”.

Steve Litten

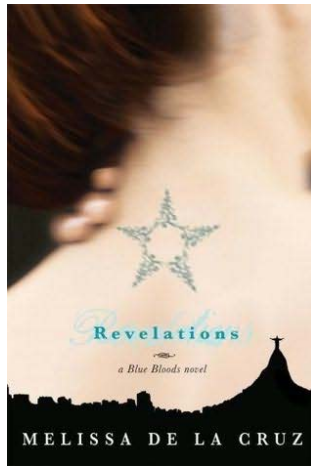
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**Melissa de la Cruz  
Revelations  
ISBN 978-1-905654-78-9  
Published by Atom  
Supplied by Hatchette  
Reviewed by Jan  
Butterworth**

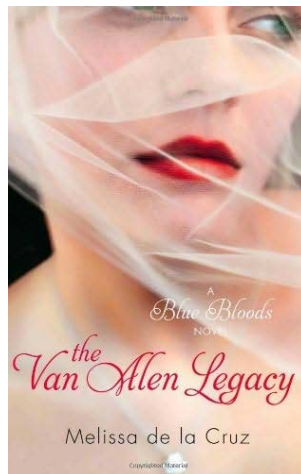
The third in the series, this starts off with Schuyler being forced to live with Mimi, due to her grandmother's will being contested. This means she also gets to live in close quarters with Jack, her crush and Mimi's twin and vampire mate.

Mimi plans, again, her and Jack's bonding ceremony, while ignoring Jack and Schuyler sneaking off together. Bliss find Dylan again, and realises she has bank spots in her memories. Kingsley turns out to be a good guy and fighting for the Blue Bloods. Or is he? The story leads up to Corcovado, an important mystical place in the vampire world, located in Brazil, where an important party is scheduled to take place but is instead the scene of an open attack by the Silver Bloods. Transcripts of venator interviews are scattered through the book I recommend reading the first two in the series, to understand the tangled family relations and to grasp the characters. Schuyler's still a misunderstood teen and Mimi a name-dropping snob, but this is a good read, if you follow the series. Suitable for teens



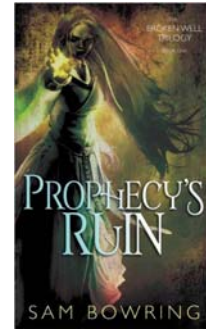
**Melissa de la Cruz  
The Van Alen Legacy  
ISBN 978-1-905654-79-6  
Published by Atom  
Supplied by Hatchette  
Reviewed by Jan  
Butterworth**

In the aftermath of Concorvado, Schuyler and her conduit Oliver are on the run together, fearing going back to New York and being found to be Silver Bloods. After a year of this, they go to beg sanctuary from the head of the French Blue Bloods and are ambushed by Silver Bloods. Bliss discovers that she is being controlled by someone living inside her and controlling her body. She has to discover if she is strong enough to fight back and regain control. Mimi has temporarily given up on Jack and has joined with Kingsley and his venator team to chase Silver Bloods responsible for the Concorvado attack. She must decide whether to strengthen the vampire twin bond between her and Jack, or follow Kingsley. Schuyler's mother plays an important part, emerging from her coma and revealing why she has a bond to Bliss. The bad guys –Silver Bloods – are finally revealed, except the Blue Blood council is shocked that the Silver Bloods exist and react by denying it. Another good read and I need to read the next to find out what happens next. A fun series.



**Sam Bowring  
Prophecy's Ruin  
Book One of the Broken Well  
Trilogy  
Orbit, p516  
Supplied by Hatchette  
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith**

There is something very evocative in Sam Bowring's writing, something very pictorial, bringing to mind images from fantasy art - something very ethereal in the style of John Howe. To my mind, it is a great pity that the cover art does not reflect this. The novel itself is the highest of high fantasy, with great magical battles and armies clashing, gods disputing, light fighting shadow, and in the middle of it all, a baby, born of prophecy, body and soul torn in two. One baby is taken by light, one by shadow, but they are two halves of one whole. I do rather think that Bowring somewhat loses the reader in the extended dream sequence which acts as the climax of this novel, but it's still great stuff, and if not wholly original, it does avoid most of the clichés. One of the strongest moments for me occurs when Losara, near the end of the world, in the depths of shadow, finds a beautiful and delicate flower. He is told that if the Light wins, this beauty will be the first to fade, burned away by the brightness. Very poignant, I thought. Obviously, this trilogy is not going to be one of those routine fantasy epics, with not a new idea in sight. And a good thing, too.

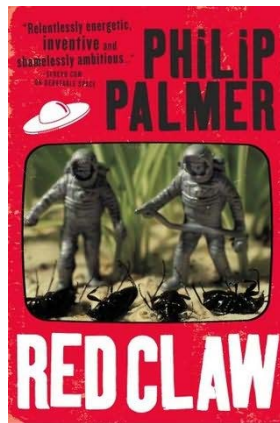


**Jim Butcher  
Changes  
The Dresden Files – Book 12  
Orbit, p438, Supplied by Hatchette  
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith**

“Changes” is a very apt title for this, the twelfth book of the “Dresden Files”. There are significant changes in both Harry Dresden's person, and in the world in which he lives in this novel, and I have to say, that if you are a follower of the Dresden Files, then you really ought to read this book – just to keep up with what's changed. That's not the only reason, because this is a real page-turner, with lots of tension and lots of action, and it's a darn good story. For those of you who haven't discovered the Dresden Files yet (there are probably some), here is what you need to know. Harry Dresden is a practicing wizard, who resides in a basement apartment in Chicago, and occasionally helps out the Chicago police with some of their more unusual cases. His universe has the usual magicians, werewolves, vampires and fae that populate urban fantasy, but those vampires are, by and large, monsters. None of that “Twilight” twaddle here, none of that silly business with vampires as darkly sexual, tortured souls. Nope, mostly the vampires here are insane, evil things that the good guys get to beat up on. I like that. “Changes” begins with a bit of a bombshell for Harry, as in the first sentence he learns that a) he has a daughter, and b) they'd kidnapped her. They, we learn very shortly, are vampires of the Red Court (the really nasty ones), and it's not just a bit of baby-sitting they have in mind. The plot is afoot, and it really motors along from there to a literally earth-shattering climax. Dresden has to make some significant sacrifices along the way, too... but no more details, I don't want to spoil it for you.

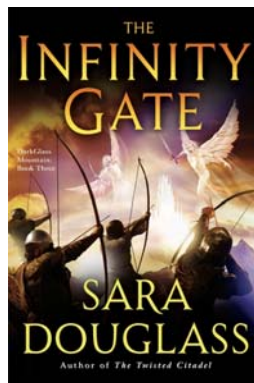
**Phillip Palmer**  
**Red Claw**  
**Orbit, 451pp**  
**Supplied by Hatchette**

**Reviewed by Jacqui Smith**  
 There is no doubt that Palmer's work is engaging and innovative, and has a strong story. I'm not surprised at the positive reviews it seems to have received. But there is a flaw, and I will illustrate by relating an actual incident. My son and I were reading



together. He had Roald Dahl's "Matilda" and I had "Red Claw". He looked over at "Red Claw", pointed and said "Bad book! Bad!" Why, might you ask? It was because there, in the middle of the page, was repeated explicit profanity. I was embarrassed, and explained that it was a good story, pity about the writer's choice of language. I suspect that Palmer does not realise the potential to alienate potential readers (and therefore miss out on sales, and possible awards) through using bad language and detailing explicit sex scenes. All I can do is to warn you not to give this book to persons under eighteen, or of a sensitive disposition. It's a pity, because this truly could be an exceptional work of proper science fiction. Palmer presents a complex and fantastic ecosystem, and a scientific expedition whose sole function is to detail the biosphere before it's all destroyed in the terra-forming process. It all goes rapidly downhill when the base computer turns rogue, and the survivors find themselves in the middle of a battle for their lives. I do not recall anyone ever so cogently debating the ethics of terra-forming, in the middle of such a rollicking good yarn!

**Sara Douglass**  
**The Infinity Gate**  
**Harper Voyager**  
**Reviewed by Cassie Pearce**  
**Supplied for review by HarperCollins Publishers**



"The Infinity Gate" is the third novel in the Darkglass Mountain trilogy. I seem to have a habit of reading trilogies and series backwards, so I wondered how "The Infinity Gate" would stack up as a read-alone novel. There were a lot of characters to get familiar with, but it was easy to get into the story line.

The main focus of the book is to save Elcho Falling which is a magical castle. There was a quest through the land where we meet different creatures, some good and some still dead where our heroes had to battle valiantly. I enjoyed the quirky juit birds and how they helped our heroes -even though the juit birds were regarded as stupid pesky birds. I enjoyed that the focus wasn't on just one hero but the glory was shared by a few.

I found the book easy to read and left me wanting to read the preceding two novels. This book had me in its grip and I couldn't stop reading it.

## **Windows 7 – Another view of it**

By Keith Smith

After reading Brett's article in the last issue, I tend to agree with most of it, but my own transition to Windows 7 wasn't without problems. Part of it may have been the use of older software, the other part may be because I installed the 64 bit version.

My version of Nero Premium 6 came up with an incompatibility alert when I started to install it, so I now run it on the backup Win XP server. Certainly I could purchase the latest program but, basically, if it works, why throw more money at it?

The other major problem I ran into was Fastlynx, the program I use to transfer data from one machine to another. I had initially discovered that, on the 32bit version, Win 7 would automatically assume its own file transfer program would be used when I plugged in the USB cable, which meant that Fastlynx couldn't find the cable. The simple fix to that was to manually override the driver with Fastlynx's driver. However, even that would not work with the 64bit version. Turns out that the 32 bit driver won't run on a 64 bit OS and there are no plans at present by the developer to fix it. So that's another program running on the backup server.

Networking seems to be an issue as well. Sometimes the Win7 machine won't see any of the XP machines on the network and I have yet to figure out why. It works the other way though (XP can see W7 so it's not a major issue). Except that the XP machines on the network can't seem to be able to print to the printer on my Windows 7 computer!

Apart from that I've got no issues with Windows 7. The only hiccup I'm finding is navigation within file windows. What used to be easy in Win 7, even moving from folder to folder and creating new ones, isn't as intuitive in Win7. Win 7 has slightly different ways of doing things than XP and it takes a little bit to get used to it. Since I skipped Vista completely, I have no idea what that was like.

A lot of software that I use, such as NOD Security, and Nikon's Capture NX, is still 32 bit as well but I suppose 64 bit versions will come out eventually. It still works but it won't be taking full advantage of the CPU and memory.

Still, once I get a new laptop, it will be running Win 7. Probably 32 bit though, unless there's a good reason to go 64 bit.

# Hellgate: London

Developer	Flagship Studios
Engine	Prime (proprietary)
Platform	Microsoft Windows
Genre	Action-RPG
Modes	Single-player, Multiplayer
Rating	18+

Have you ever wondered why Blizzard software were able to release Diablo II within 3 years of Diablo? No? Well, wonder at this... *Why has it taken the best part of a decade for Diablo 3 to follow Diablo 2?*

The answer, far from blowin' in the wind, lies in four simple words: Flagship Studios & Hellgate: London. It seems there were what they so charmingly call "Creative Differences" between the Blizzard North (the creators of Diablo and Diablo 2), and Blizzard software's new corporate owners—Read Electronic Arts into that—and most (i.e. 9 of the 10 people involved) of Blizzard North's staff up and decamped, taking their not inconsiderable royalties with them, and they founded Flagship Studios with it.

Which brings us to "Hellgate:London." The game is set in about 25 years from now, twenty odd years after a Portal to Hell opened in London and millions of Demons poured out of it, driving the pitiful remnants of Humankind underground (literally) to survive. Now we are rebuilding and starting to take back the surface, led by Templars (who weren't quite as extinct as everyone thought), mages and Hunters (ex-special forces).

I had this described to me as Diablo 2 set in London. It isn't. It's more of a cross between the action RPG and FPS Genres, you can play the whole game as a First person Shooter, but to get progress you have to interact with other NPCs and achieve set goals – hence the action RPG element. Or you can pull the view out to a Diablo like distance, then it resembles "Heavy Gear". The whole is done in nicely detailed and atmospheric 3D, and there are literally hundreds of options in gear, weapons and enemies to choose from. Character selection is broadly similar to NWN2 and the customizing options similarly limiting. There are two game modes, Single player and Online via Flagships' servers. Flagship also offer a premium server option (i.e. you pay for it), but the standard servers are free to play, just like Diablo 2.

[According to Wikipedia however, the servers shut down on February 1, 2009, when Flagship Studios went into receivership—Ed.]

The game itself was criticised on release for being bug laden, but there are patches out now for almost all the



problems. (Now up to patch version 1.6 from the first patch 0.5). I played it for some time when purchased on TradeMe and I have to confess that I rather liked it, quirky bits included – Sometimes the NPC "background" dialogue is almost at odds with the quest dialogue (text onscreen) and the effect can be hilarious. But the actual gameplay is solid and well thought out, although I strongly recommend a read of Mr Manual first, or you will miss out on some cool toys. (You can upgrade weapons if they have slots, or create whole new weapons with parts you pick up...)

There are swords, bows, guns, knives and magic. And hundreds of scary monsters! If this is your bag I think you will enjoy it. Oh, and the game music is actually worth a listen, at least you won't want to turn it off....

I grade this a solid 3.8 out of 5.



## Uncorked Broderick Wells

I've been working my way through the old back catalogue, like I threatened. Started off with *Battlestar Galactica* (the new version, not *Cattlecart Galactica*, the old version). Was there a bit of a jump between season 2 and season 3? Did I miss an episode or did they just decide to go from "found the planet" to "Cylons have taken over the new colony"? Your answers to the Editor, along with good whisky.

I'm not sad I missed the end of *Lost* – the island was Purgatory, and it took how many seasons to find out? That really is a copout, guys. I'm sure even the polar bear was disappointed with that piece of scripting. And what a great result at the World Cup yesterday: Germany 4 Australia 0: *Deutschland uber Alles*. I must check who else is in that pool so that I can broaden my international support.

Bloody MS word is trying to change that last sentence into something really odd. And I haven't been drinking (much) yet. The keys are all well in focus. I suppose, to emulate John Waitts, the computer is drunk. Anyhow, I look forward to spending several nights in front of the telly, watching *Battlestar Galactica*, trying not to second guess the episodes from the notes in the DVD box and then watching international soccer. Must lay in a few more bottles of medicinal heating.



## Obits

May 15

**John Shepherd-Barron** (aged 84)

Indian-born Scottish inventor of the automated teller machine (ATM) in 1967.

May 16

**Stephen Perry** (aged 55—homicide)

American cartoon and comics writer - "Thundercats" and "Silverhawks" TV shows in the 1980s.

May 20

**Hugh Morris**

NZ businessman who founded McDonald's New Zealand in 1976... Now you know who to blame!

May 22

**Flight Lieutenant Peter Hall**, DFC & Bar (Aged 88)  
New Zealand flying ace during World War II.

**Martin Gardner** (aged 95)

American mathematics and science writer. He wrote the Mathematical Games column in *Scientific American* from 1956 to 1981, and published over 70 books

May 24

**Stella Nova** (aka Stephen Charles New - aged 50)

English punk rock and New Wave guitarist & singer.

May 25

**Arthur Herzog** (aged 83)

American SF and crime writer (works include "The Swarm", "Orca", "IQ 83").

May 28

**Gary Coleman** (aged 40)

American actor ("Different Strokes")

May 31

**Chris Haney** (aged 59)

Canadian journalist and co-creator of the Trivial Pursuit board game

June 1

**Miss Ellie** (aged 17)

American Chinese Crested Dog, winner of title World's Ugliest Dog.

June 12

**Al Williamson** (aged 79)

American cartoonist and comic book illustrator (*Weird Science*, *Star Wars*, *Daredevil*, *Flash Gordon*, *Spider-Man*). Winner of multiple awards.



June 14

**Leonid Kizim** (aged 68)

Ukrainian Soviet cosmonaut.

# SOLOMON KANE

Directed by Michael J. Bassett  
Produced by Paul Berrow  
Samuel Hadida  
Kevan Van Thompson  
Written by Michael J. Bassett  
Starring Max von Sydow  
James Purefoy  
Rachel Hurd-Wood  
Pete Postlethwaite  
Music by Klaus Badelt  
Cinematography Dan Laustsen  
Editing by Andrew MacRitchie  
Release date(s) December 23, 2009 (France)  
Country France, Czech Republic, UK  
Language English

I first heard of this movie over a year ago, and encouraged by a number of fairly positive views and reviews, the most notable of which called it a “**dark and ballsy ‘Highlander’ for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**”, I have kept a weather eye out for it since. To no avail – no NZ release in cinemas, no DVD release.. no further news. In short, it seemed to have sunk without a trace. Until I found a download bit-torrent for it a few days ago. Joy! Thanks I, “At least I can get to see it”. After all it cannot possibly be worse than “2012” which I had the misfortunate torture to watch (2/3 of it, that’s to say about one hour too much of it anyway, before I erased it in disgust!)

So, is “Solomon Kane” a turkey? Short answer is “Hell, No!” It’s a very dark fantasy, set in the England of James the First, but not quite the England of our history books. It’s based on the character created by Robert E Howard (yes, THAT Robert E Howard!), but Conan he is most assuredly NOT!

Solomon Kane is a Pirate and Freebooter who discovers, during the sack of a Moorish Town, that his soul has been claimed by Satan. And he’s not ready to go! He returns to England, fleeing to one of the few monasteries left to try to redeem himself, and save his soul from damnation. But England is being haunted by dark forces, and soon Kane finds that following the way of peace is not his fate... or his redemption.

James Purefoy is outstanding, giving Solomon real depth and a darkened heart. (Purefoy played Mark Anthony in HBO’s “Rome” a couple of years ago, and Solomon is equally complex and shaded as a character.) Peter Postlethwaite does his usual turn as the wiser elder, with Alice Krige as his wife.

Max Von Sydow has a nice star turn as

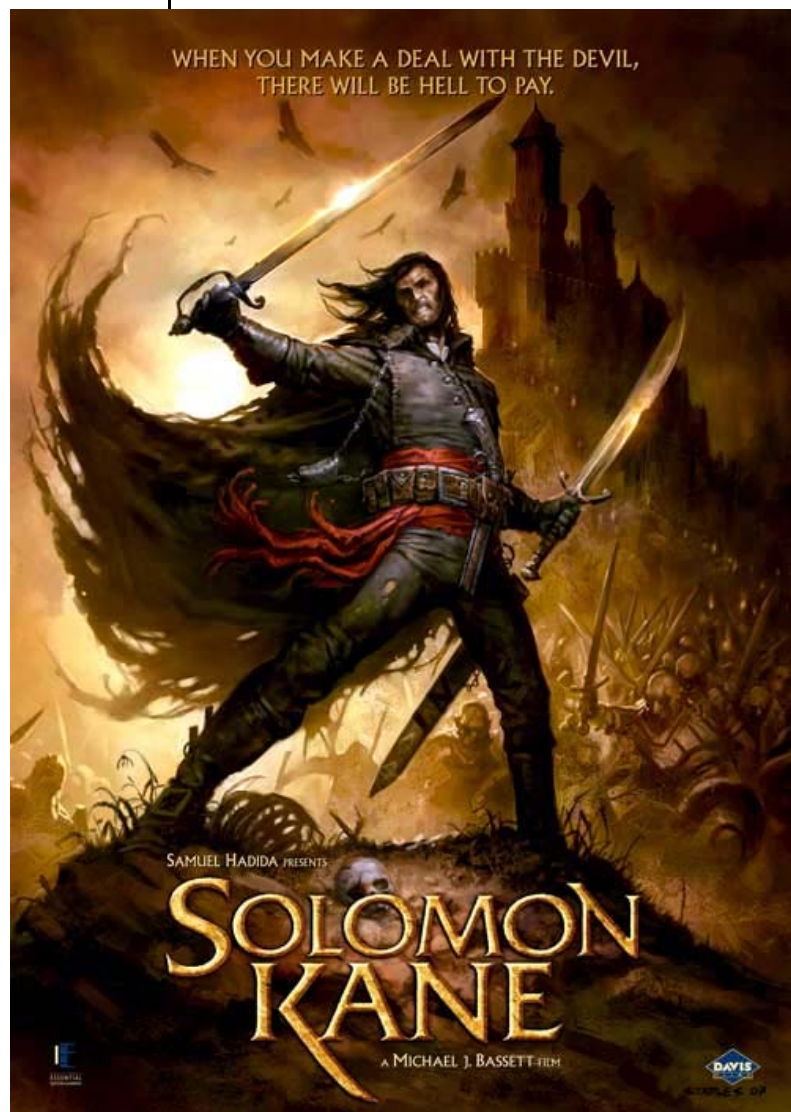
Solomon’s father, the original impetus to Solomon’s career as a Pirate and... well that would be telling, would it not.?

It was filmed in England and the Czech republic, and is a UK, French and Czech co-production. The production values are very high, and it shows onscreen that the money was spent wisely. But, be warned, its a very Dark fantasy, with plenty of blood-letting, almost on the scale of the original (Ah-Nuld!) Conan movie. No PC, be nice, BS Here! What a change! Hell, they even arrange for the CLK to get his little CLK throat cut! Yay!

It’s not perfect, there are one or two WTF moments, probably due to time-related edits, and the pacing is a tiny bit... relaxed in places, but overall it’s a really, really, good movie. I did think the whole opening was a tad longish, but everything about it is done right, and perfectly sets up the whole of the rest of the movie. And it is an origin story, clearly leaving the ending open for the further adventures of Mr Kane. I, for one, really hope they will follow, now....

And yes, it is indeed ‘a Dark and Ballsy Highlander for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’!

[According to Wikipedia, “Solomon Kane” rates 82% (“Fresh”) at the Rotten Tomatoes—Ed]



# National Space Agency of Ukraine

Ukrainian National Space Agency (NSA) - the specially authorized central executive body, which ensures the implementation of public policies on space activities, administers the mandated areas of management, is responsible for the state of its development.

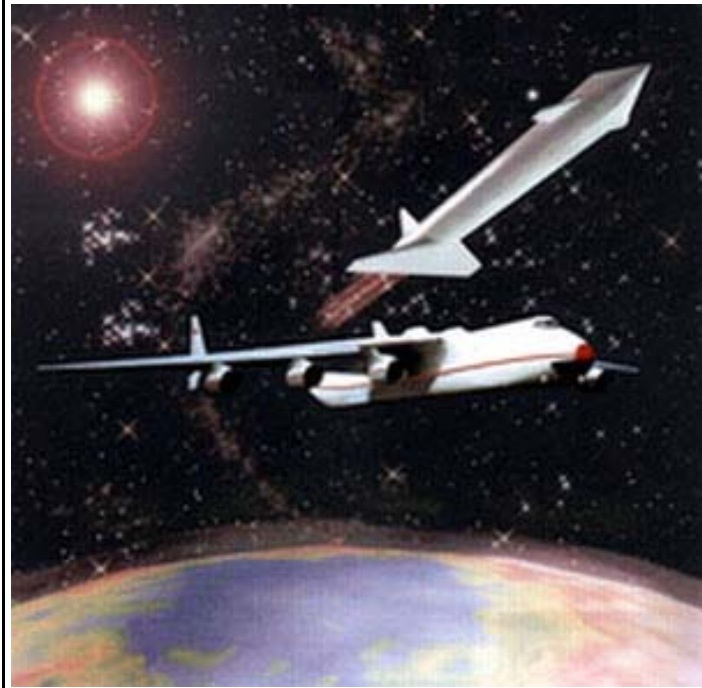


The history of the agency and the space industry of the country Ukraine, which inherited from the Soviet Union belong to the space-rocket company, is a powerful space-faring nations with great potential. National Space Agency of Ukraine was established on 29 February 1992 by Presidential

Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. In 1999 they changed the status of NSA, under its authority have been transferred more than 20 companies and organizations, including the SDO "Southern" and "Southern Machine-Building Plant named after A. Makarov.

Thus was created a full independent space industry of the national economy of Ukraine, which designs and manufactures scientific and application satellites and several types of launch vehicle families such as "Zenith", "Cyclone", "Dnipro", including Russian and international customers. The first launch their own satellite ("Sich-1") from own launchers ("Cyclone") Ukraine produced 31 August 1995 and became the ninth country to do so. Start

was implemented from the Russian spaceport Plesetsk. New national satellite carrier rocket "Mayak" has been designed and also aerospace space system "Svitiaz" on the basis of Ukrainian aircraft An-225 and Zenith-rocket. Svitiaz allows launching the space rockets from flying An-225. Unfortunately those starts weren't realized because of lack of finances.



One of the main roles in the episodes about the destruction of Las Vegas in the movie "2012" played the An-225 (Mriya). For the movie created a photo-realistic copy of the aircraft - the world's first computer model of the An-225 with the highest level of detail. The film contains some distorted facts about the plane, such as: displaying significantly reduced dimensions of the load compartment and a non-existent rear cargo hatch. Also on board affixed "ANTONOV 500" and the flag of Azerbaijan.

Ukraine participates in Sea-launch project with Zenith space launchers (15%). Ukraine and Brazil are going to build the new spaceport Alcantra in Brazil and launch new Zenith-3L space launchers from 2012.



The main objectives of NSA

- Development of conceptual frameworks of state policy in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and in the interests of national security;
- Ensure the organization and development of space activities in Ukraine and under the jurisdiction of Ukraine outside its borders;
- promoting national security and defense of the State with the use of space resources;
- Organization and development of Ukraine's cooperation with other nations and international organizations in the space industry.

By  
Leonid  
Tkachuk



# Russian Flying Saucer

Russia has launched a program to build a powerful, multi-purpose airship that will certainly cause many people on the ground to take notice.

# The Sky at Night – June 2010

Hopefully, this will become a regular column in Novazine, and is taken from information provided in the NZ Astronomical Yearbook and the Astronomical Society Newsletters.

Mercury is very low in the morning sky, appearing just before sunrise

Venus shines brightly in the north west in the evening sky. Located in Cancer.

Mars is also in the evening sky in a northerly direction. Located in Leo.

Jupiter is in the morning sky, rising about 2am

Saturn is high in the evening sky, a bit more to the east from Mars. Located in Virgo.

The full moon is on the 26<sup>th</sup> (a Saturday) and is marked by a partial lunar eclipse. The Moon enters the umbra at 10:17 pm. Only 50 percent of the Moon will be in eclipse and the maximum occurs at 11:38 pm and it leaves the umbra at 1 am.

As well as the bright planet Venus in the evening sky, the brightest star, Sirius is still low on the western horizon. High overhead is the constellation of

Corvus (the Crow) and the bright star Spica in Virgo. Below Spica, towards the north is the red star Arcturus in Bootes.

Looking to the east, the hook shape of Scorpius is rising with the bright red star of Antares in it. Also up overhead and more to the south is the familiar Southern Cross (Crux) straddled by Centaurus. The Milky Way runs through Scorpius, on through Crux and down to the west towards Canis Major and Orion so, if you can find a nice dark sky it should be a spectacular sight, arcing nearly overhead from west to east.

Matariki rises in the morning sky this month just before the Sun, marking the beginning of the Maori New Year and time for planting.

The bright star Canopus is low in the south-west, and Achernar is very low in the south. Follow the long arm of the Southern Cross down and you may be able to find it if there's nothing in the way.

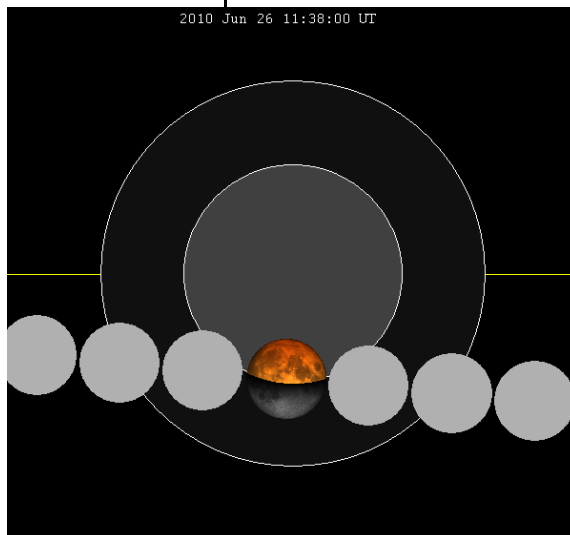
The "Locomoskayner" airship takes to the air with nothing more than helium, but will also have special outfitted hot air cells to regulate its buoyancy, RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Propulsion of the craft is provided by several electric motors, and small wings on the periphery of its disc-shaped hull give the vehicle extra lift in flight. The aircrafts unusual shape, which strikingly resembles an unidentified flying object (UFO) also gives it extra stability, and ability to resist wind currents to hover for extended periods above targets on the ground.

Varying models of the Locomoskayners are expected to be used for the transportation of people and cargo, as well as surveillance and monitoring. Version under development will be able carry 40tons load on long distances.

The largest version in the works will be able to airlift 600 tons. Main purpose of this development – transportation of heavy loads in Arktica-Siberia region. At this time power generator turbines up to 150t carry on Ukrainian plane AN-225 Mriya. But this carrier requeres special aerodroms. So new airship can carry special mashinery on big distances at smallest cost and doesn't need expensive aerodroms.

The five-year project is based in the city of Ulyanovsk (Birthplace of Vladimir Ulyanov-Lenin), some 900 km east from Moscow. The project's developer, LocomoSky, plans to generate \$90 million worth of investment.



By  
Keith  
Smith

# New Zealand June Board Game Releases

## Batavia

Publisher: Queen Games  
 Designer: Dan Glimne & Grzegorz Rejchtman  
 No. of players: 3 – 5  
 Time to Play: 60 mins

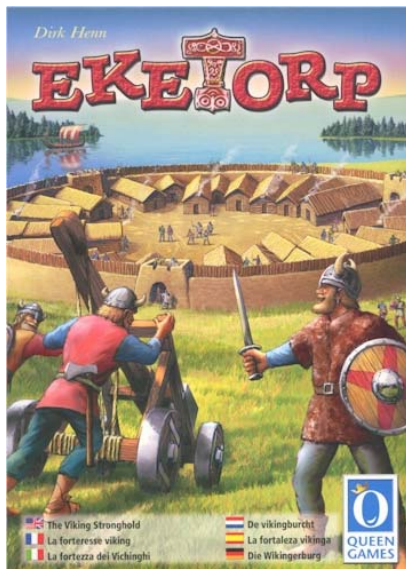
You are merchants in the time of the East-India trading company trying to earn the most gold to win the game. You need certain cards to catch a lift on different ships, the cards are auctioned off with the highest bidder getting the card(s) and then giving the money to the losers. From what I have read it's got interesting game mechanics, but the theme doesn't seem to have much to do with how you play the game.



## Eketorp

Publisher: Dirk Henn  
 Designer: Queen Games  
 No. of players: 3 - 6  
 Time to Play: 45 mins

You are Vikings squabbling over the resources needed to build your stronghold before the others. The way the conflict is managed sounds more like a euro-war hybrid game than a straight wargame, which potentially could be a good meeting point for both types of players.



## Eruk the Eskimo

Publisher: Manfred Reindl & Stefan Dorra  
 Designer: Queen Games  
 No. of players: 2 – 5  
 Time to Play: 20 mins  
 Ages: 5 plus

A children's memory game with a little bit of push-you-luck element to it.



## Granada

Publisher: Queen Games  
 Designer: Dirk Henn  
 No. of players: 2- 6  
 Time to Play: 45 mins

Looks and is advertised as an addition to the Alhambra style of games. It's a tile placement game where you are building your own little city in front of you, and playing match with the moat that can be on some of the tiles borders. As with Alhambra, it's a battle to get the money type you want, and buy the tiles you want before the other players get there first. I enjoy Alhambra, so wouldn't turn down trying this game, but if I owned Alhambra I would think twice about buying.



## Mystery Express

Publisher: Days of Wonder  
 Designer: Antoine Bauza and Serge Laget  
 No. of players: 3 - 5  
 Time to Play: 75 mins

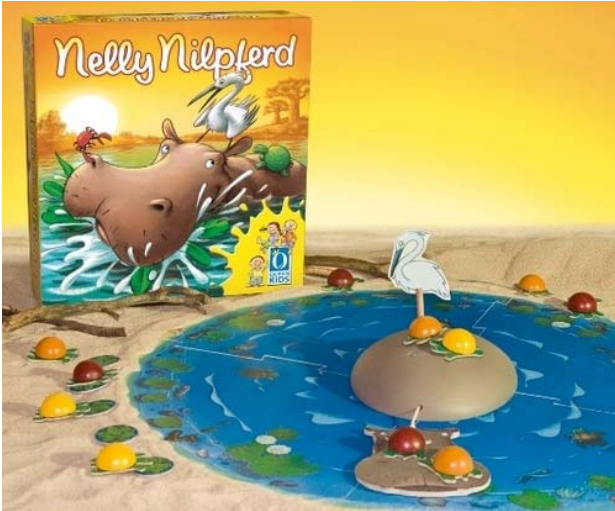
A murder deduction game that takes place on the fictional Mystery Express train, so it's Cluedo on speed (or is that 'with speed').



**Nelly Nilpferd**

Publisher: Queen Games  
 Designer: Andreas Frei, Lukas Frei, and Ueli Frei  
 No. of players: 2 - 4  
 Time to Play: 15 mins  
 Ages: 6 plus

You are trying to get all your turtle on to Nelly the hippo first. The problem is when ever Nelly accidentlallyy eats a plant that has a crab it pinches her nose, which causes her to dive underwater... and unfortunately some turtles fall off.



**Samarkand: Route to Riches**

Publisher: Queen Games  
 Designer: David V.H. Peters and Harry Wu  
 No. of players: 2 - 5  
 Time to Play: 30 mins

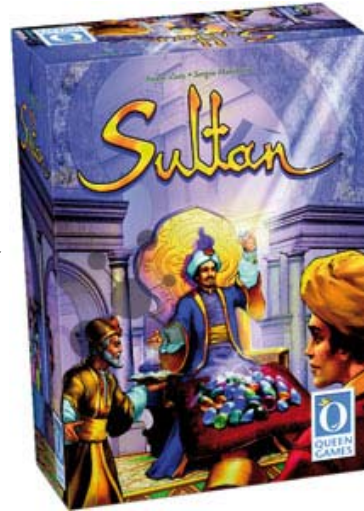
It's a train style game that doesn't have trains, but instead has camel trade routes with a bit of intermarriage between players' families to form useful alliances. I do think it was a nice touch getting the resources in the game to reflect what was rare and sought after during that time period. Looks quite straight forward to play, and I wouldn't turn down trying it for the first time.



**Sultan**

Publisher: Queen Games  
 Designer: Sergio Halaban and Andre Zatz  
 No. of players: 2 - 5  
 Time to Play: 30 mins

The sultan wants you to go shopping in the bazaar and bring back the best selection of gems to win his daughters hand in marriage. It's a little auction game that has a dose of bluffing, and out-guessing your opponents to collect the best sets of gems by the end of the game.



**Click Clack**

Publisher: Rio Grande Games  
 Designer: Birgit Hahnle  
 No. of players: 2 - 4  
 Time to Play: 20 mins  
 Ages: 5 plus

You are squirrels trying to steal 7 tasty morsels right from under the nose of Freddy the Piglet. Players move their squirrels and then rotate the board. The squirrel might get lucky and a bit of food gets magnetically attached to them. Sounds and looks very cute.



**Expansions:**

Chicago Express Expansion

The list of games was taken from the list at [www.pixelpark.co.nz](http://www.pixelpark.co.nz). All pictures in this article were found at [www.boardgamegeek.com](http://www.boardgamegeek.com), and I thank those who spent their time taking them.

# ConText 2011

## SF Convention in Auckland

ConText will be held over Queen's Birthday Weekend in Auckland, Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011. The venue is the Centra Auckland Airport Hotel.

[http://context.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://context.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

Catherine Asaro, an American author of both science fiction and fantasy novels, is the GoH. The fan GoH will be Lynelle Howell, editor of Phoenixine and an active Wellington fan. The crew are also in negotiations with other potential guests.

This is a marvellous opportunity for anyone who enjoys science fiction to participate in four days of sharing their hobby with other fans. There will be discussion panels, organised gaming, costuming events, the Quiz, a video stream and a chance to buy science fiction related items. The winners of the 2011 Sir Julius Vogel Awards for Excellence in New Zealand Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror will be announced on the Sunday night at the Conjunction Banquet.

Full and day memberships will be available if you wish to attend for one or two days only. Organised events will be going into the early evening. The bar will be open all day until late.



### Stella Nova Wiki:

[http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

### Nova Zine Back Issues:

<http://stella-nova.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/StellaNova:Novazine-new>

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### This Month:

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| BOOK  | Monday 28 June<br>at Chez Smith, Mangere Bridge    |
| SPACE | Friday 2 July<br>at to be confirmed                |
| BOG   | Saturday 19 June<br>at Louise's place in Pakuranga |

### Next Meeting:

Wednesday July 21st, 2010  
7:30pm  
Auckland Horticultural Centre,  
990 Great North Road,  
Western Springs

### Upcoming Events:

**August 27-29**      **Au Contraire**  
2010 New Zealand NatCon Wellington  
<http://www.aucontraire.org.nz/>

**September 2-6**      **AussieCon IV**  
2010 WorldCon in Melbourne  
<http://www.aussiecon4.org.au/>

**September 23-26**      **GenCon Australia Brisbane**  
<http://www.genconoz.com/>