



You will be Exterminated!

(Photo by Jon Rygel)

Issue XXXV - Mar/Apr 2013

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Musings from Under the Mountain

Yes, it's really true... On May 1st, Keith and I will be celebrating our 20th wedding anniversary. It's hard to believe that it's been twenty years since that day when we were married in that lovely little stone church on the hill in Mangere Bridge. I realise that I'm getting all sentimental. It's allowed at times like this.

Personally, I blame Maree. I was, as they say, "between relationships" when she pointed me at Keith. And the rest followed... I will say one thing about choosing a partner—go for someone you believe you can be friends with for the rest of your life. Because

friendship lasts a whole lot longer than romance. Be lovers, yes... but be friends first and last and always.

Of course, if I must blame Maree, I must also blame this club, without

which I would probably never have got into fandom, and Steve Walters in particular, who introduced me to the club, back in the 1980's. We were younger then, there were a lot more of us, and the internet hadn't come to take over our lives. The club was a lifeline to new SF, especially TV programmes. We'd get people to record the latest ST:TNG in the states and send it over on videotape—and this was still much faster than waiting for the TV stations to play it. I still remember cursing TV2 for burying Babylon 5 on Saturday afternoons... What were they thinking? Of course nowadays, Prime is playing new Dr Who in prime time and just couple of weeks after transmission—and if the boy child doesn't care to wait, we can always download it off the internet. How times have changed!

Jacqui, Editor



Contents

Editorial and Presidential Address	2
Doctor Who Event report	3
Sky at Night	4-5
Obituaries	6-7
Uncorked	8
Quiz—Cats in Space!	8-9
Reviews	10-11
Notices and Upcoming Events	12

Alan's Inaugural Address

As of the last Stella Nova AGM, I find myself officially elected unopposed to the presidency of the club. Presumably, it must be my turn in the barrel...

As I take up this position, the club is somewhat smaller than it used to be, although the Internet is making up at least some of the shortfall. Thanks to Keith, Stella Nova now has a Facebook page. Membership of the page now stands at twenty-seven, which is actually more than the number of currently paid-up club members!

We're also looking into shifting the patterns of the club meetings. We will be retaining the meetings at the Auckland Horticultural Society Hall, but with regular meetings there quarterly instead of monthly. The most recent AHC meeting was in March, so the next meeting there will be on the third Wednesday of June. Jacqui has indicated that she may be able to secure a guest speaker for the club meeting in June; we'll confirm this closer to the time.

In the meantime, however, rather than let the habit of club members meeting face to face lapse too badly, Keith and Jacqui have graciously indicated that they're willing to make Chez Smith available as a meeting place for the months in between the quarterly meetings. Next meeting there will be on the third Wednesday of May; the plan is to do some board-gaming post-meeting.

As we make these changes, the question we need to address is, how can we make the club grow?

Adapting to the Internet age is all very well, but are we going to become the cyberspace equivalent of a gated community, locked up in our own exclusive little world, or can we bring other fans – and particularly younger fans – into the fold? This is another reason why it's wise to maintain our connection to the Auckland Horticultural Society Hall for at least the quarterly meetings; a neutral public meeting space remains the easiest way to provide newcomers with an initial face-to-face meeting with club members.

Another issue we need to address is ensuring that those who come to club events and join in online are, in fact, financial members of the club. While we certainly don't want to bully anybody, and while it's fine to bring friends to a few Stella Nova events as an introduction to the club, to keep the club running, we do need to ensure that we aren't simply catering to fair-weather fans who want something for nothing. As Keith has taken over the post of Stella Nova treasurer, if you're not currently a paid-up member, please contact him to organise payment of your membership.

The crew will definitely need to work on these issues and many others in the months ahead, but it's for the benefit of you, the fans, that we're running this club. If you have any ideas for boosting the club's profile or bringing in new members, then let us know about them. To misquote John F. Kennedy, 'Ask not what your club can do for you; ask what you can do for your club!'

Alan, President, Stella Nova

Four Doctors and a Dalek

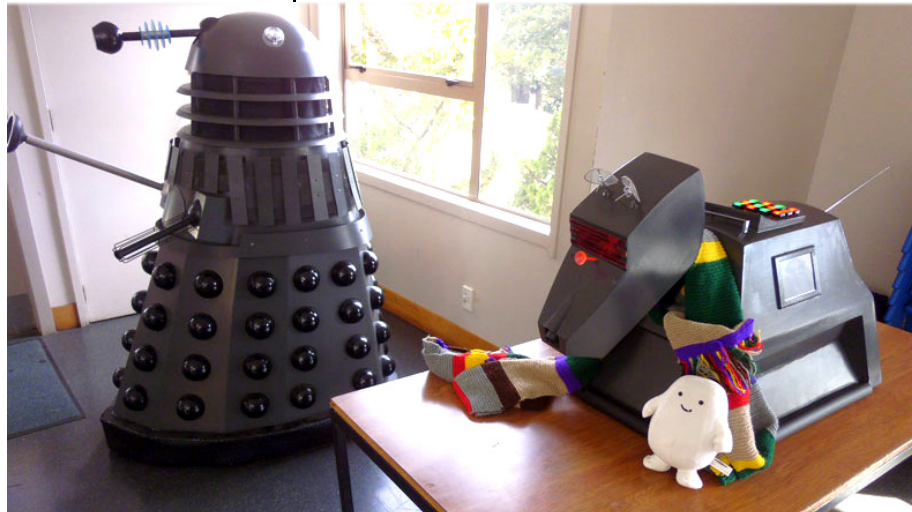
By Jon Rygel

They came to the Dorothy Winstone Centre at Auckland Girls' Grammar recently. Three of the doctors had been here before. The remaining Doctor, Peter Davison had not previously visited New Zealand fans. The Dalek was Nicholas Briggs, a writer and voice actor, who interacted with the 300-strong crowd that had come to see the show - late entries to the audience were chased along by calls to exterminate them for their tardiness.

Nicholas apologised for not bringing a vocoder, but did a quite good imitation of the voice of the Daleks without one. He also described how tricky it was to get a sonic screwdriver through Customs, "Excuse me sir, what is this object?" (Paul McGann had had the previous Weta original presented to him stolen on a train journey some weeks before).

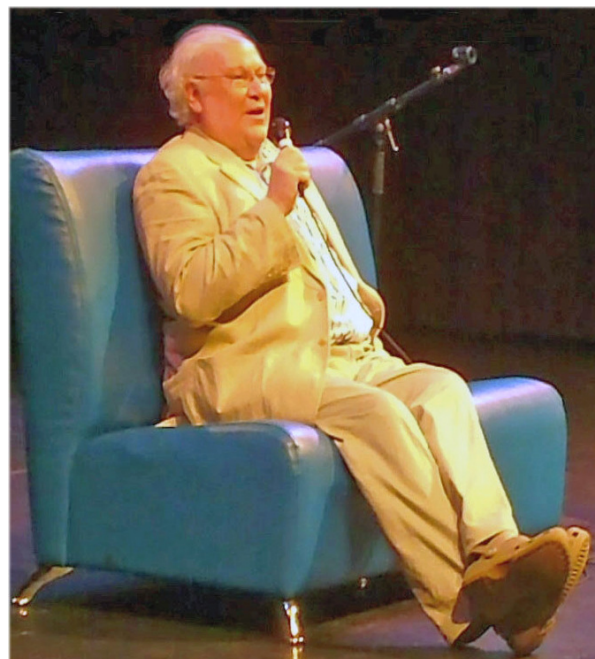
The doctors discussed their costumes and how they were designed for them with only a small amount of input. Colin Baker mentioned how he would have preferred a nice black leather jacket and short hair. Paul McGann revealed that he was not keen on the wig he had to wear.

Sylvester McCoy said he had not been asked to be in the 50th anniversary Doctor Who show as of yet. Bill Geradts requested spoon-playing from Sylvester - as he said that no organiser of a Doctor Who event with McCoy could ever hope to get away without the spoons being played.



Two Daleks were present which both had some nice lighting effects (see cover photo). One had one of the Daleks' deadliest weapons - a fully loaded fire extinguisher, which delighted the crowd with some short bursts with voice impressions by Nicholas himself.

Long queues were apparent for the photo opportunities and autograph signings with photos being later available for viewing at the photographers website (pixeload).



DOCTORS WHO in NZ

Text and photos by Jon Rygel

The Sky at Night

May 2013

On the 17th of March, several Slooh (www.slooh.com) members got together and organised a Messier Marathon. The objective was to point the robotic telescope at as many Messier objects as we could, in one night, and image them. We did well, getting 97 out of the 110. M30 couldn't be reached, and a few others were taken out by rising humidity at Mt Teide half an hour before the end of missions, and some wandering clouds near the start. Apart from that, the night was clear and some excellent images were achieved.

Since I'm in New Zealand, I had never participated in such a Marathon before, because there are several Messier objects that cannot be observed properly from here - some can only be seen briefly and poorly while others do not appear in our skies at all. To make it work from the Canary Island telescope, we had to plan the order carefully according to which objects could be seen when. Allowances had to be made for the telescope not being able to track an object when it is transiting the meridian as well as the automatic 'soft' horizon. In some cases, it was necessary to ask Slooh's technician to override the built in limits.

Given there were 109 objects to view, and each imaging slot lasts for five minutes there was some juggling going on to minimize the amount of slewing required to get them all. In addition at least 22 members had to donate their mission reservation slots to make this work. Fortunately there are more than 110 slots during the night. So what how we did, was to ask that the entire night be blanked out, then when members were ready to make their Messier reservations, the slots they had requested for that night were open and the allocated object for those slots entered. The extra slots were filled by co-ordinate missions using the wide field camera to show more than one Messier in the same shot, such as the Leo Triplet and the Virgo Cluster. It is possible to 'piggyback' on other people's missions and snap your own images of what they're looking at. So that was what I was doing all that Sunday. (I should point out that the Canary Islands are almost at the antipodes from New Zealand so when the observatory is running at night, it's an all day run for us Kiwis)

We organised a Google hangout alongside the Marathon to discuss the marathon and talk about the objects as we looked at them. I found it rather hard to fill a five minute slot with facts about an object especially when, for a while, it was one globular cluster after another. But, it was a lot of fun and we're planning on doing it all again next year. I've gone through my Slooh Messier album on Facebook and checked to see if I had collected any better photos of each object from my accumulating photo collection of Slooh photos. The link is here: <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150410653068609.379984.633373608&type=1>

by
Keith
Smith

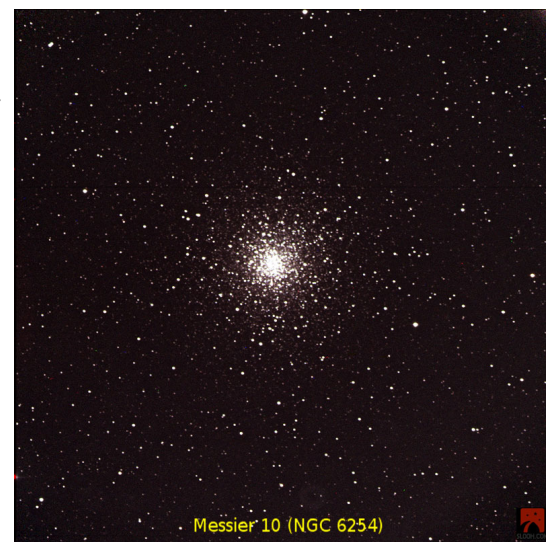
So, what is a Messier Marathon anyway? It is an attempt to view all 110 Messier objects in a single night. The number of Messier objects visible in any one night varies depending on a few factors, including the location of the observer, the duration of daylight/night, and the season (the positions of the Messier objects relative to the sun varies with the season). The best time, for the northern hemisphere, is a window of a few weeks from mid March to early April during a new moon. It is also best to do this from a northern latitude of around 25 as further north, objects such as M6 and M7 in Scorpio are not visible while further south, M81 and M82 in Ursa Major disappear from view.

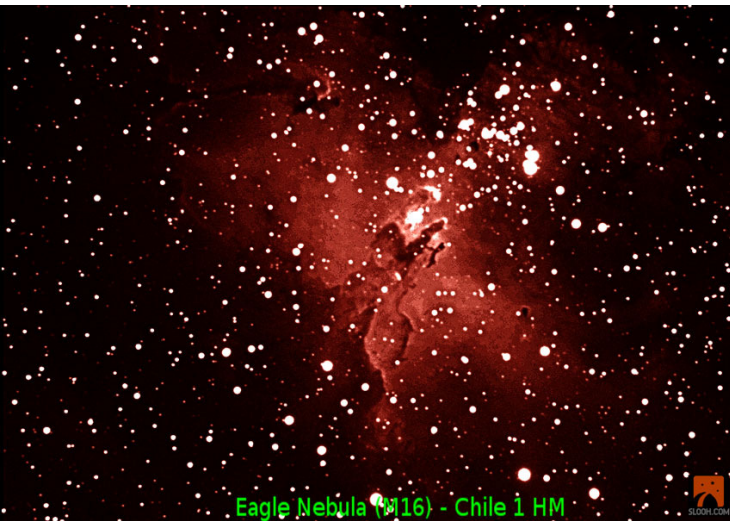
The usual procedure is to start at dusk by observing the objects that are low in the west then working across the sky finally reaching the ones that are rising in the east before dawn. There are clusters of objects in Virgo and Sagittarius so time needs to be budgeted for them. Many astronomical organizations organise marathons yearly and some issue certificates to those that complete them. This website contains more information about the marathons and how to run them. <http://messier.seds.org/xtra/marathon/marathon.html> It is said that the first one was run in 1985 by an observer in Arizona, but someone else in California completed the same thing an hour later.

Other variants on the marathon are possible. There's the Messier Memory Marathon where observers need to use their memories to find each object. Other observers add in the eight planets (and Pluto) to create the Solar System Marathon, which Unfortunately, for a few years, starting from now, Uranus and Neptune will be too close to the sun during the usual time for a Messier Marathon to do this. Other possibilities are adding in Caldwell Catalog objects or, for observers in the Southern Hemisphere, combining visible Caldwell and Bennett objects into a marathon. Another challenge, after completing the Messier is to observe what is known as the Herschel 400 - a list of the brighter NGC objects.

What Slooh was doing is effectively yet another variant, a photographic marathon, attempting to image every Messier in one night and providing FITS pictures for those members who wish them. Using Slooh, I have managed to image all of them and am currently working on the Herschel 400 - as well as many other NGC objects that are part of galactic clusters and can be used for photo mosaics.

*One of
those many
Messier
globular
clusters—
Messier 10*





Eagle Nebula (M16) - Chile 1 HM

So what are these Messier objects anyway? (Not those oddly dusty objects found under the bed, then? - Ed.) They are named after Charles Messier (1730-1817) who was a French comet hunter. He kept finding these 'fuzzy blobs' that were found in the same place of the sky, night after night, and hence couldn't be comets. So he decided to make a list of these 'annoyances' so he wouldn't keep tripping over them. The catalogue was composed between the years 1758 to 1781, and not only contained his own discoveries, but objects that were already known and objects discovered by his colleague Pierre Mechain. The final list contained 110 objects, but some say there are only 109 as the object listed as M102 may have been an accidental duplication of M101. Others, including Slooh, consider NGC 5866 to be the object seen. The much fainter NGC5928 has been proposed, but at 14th magnitude, was probably too faint for Messier to see.

When Sir Patrick Moore devised his Caldwell Catalogue, to compliment the Messier Catalogue in Dec 1995, which contained objects that he considered Messier had missed as well as objects in the Southern Hemisphere that Messier couldn't see, he also went with 109 objects instead of 110. So combining the Messier, Caldwell and Herschel 400 catalogues, the observer would see nearly 600 objects (there are some duplicates).

So is it possible to run a Marathon in the Southern Hemisphere, maybe using the Bennett Catalogue? Probably not. There is at least one Bennett object in every hour of Right Ascension so, unless one is at a very high Southern latitude, where most of the objects would be circumpolar, then the Sun would be obscuring at least one object at any time of the year.

There were earlier Southern Hemisphere catalogues though. Nicholas Louis de la Caille (1713-1762), did a catalogue of 3 times 14 southern hemisphere objects. A few of them turned out to be mistakes but there may be enough to do a marathon. The list can be found here: <http://messier.seds.org/xtra/history/lacaille.html> and I intend to image all of them once Slooh has a southern hemisphere observatory going again. A partial Messier Marathon can be done from Auckland. The day to do that is the 13th of January when 92 objects can be seen. This is the only day this can be done as M11 just becomes visible then the following night, M15 is out of reach.

So, apart from Messier objects, what else is going on in the night sky? Planetary wise, Jupiter has disappeared in the evening twilight but Saturn has taken the prominent position. Saturn will be at opposition on the 25th of April and as May goes on, it will be rising earlier and earlier in the evening. The rings can be easily seen in a small telescope as they are tilted towards the earth and it's largest moon, Titan, could also be picked up in a small telescope. Venus will also start being an evening object in May. Mercury and Mars are in the morning sky but only appear shortly before sunrise making them both difficult to see. We're looking perpendicular to the plane of the galaxy so, in the direction of Leo and Virgo several galaxies can be found. There is the Leo Triplet (M65, M66 and NGC3628), the Virgo Cluster and the Coma Cluster. For more information visit <http://www.rasnz.org.nz/Stars/EveningSky/2013/May/Sky.shtml>

Phases of the Moon:

- Last Quarter—2nd May
- New Moon—10th May
- First Quarter—18th May
- Full Moon—25th May

There is a slight partial eclipse of the sun on May the 10th and a partial lunar eclipse on the 26th April.



Trifid Nebula (M20) - C1HM

Messier objects can be anything from dead stars to stellar nurseries (above) to entire galaxies (below).



Andromeda Galaxy - M31 (T1 - Taken by Keith Smith)

by
Keith
Smith

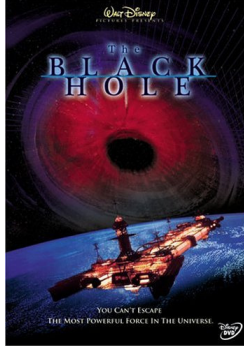
O B I T S Obituaries

February 11

Erik Quistgaard, (aged 91), Danish engineer who was director general of the European Space Agency from 1980 to 1984. He oversaw the Ariane rocket's development and Spacelab's many contributions to space science.

February 13

Gerry Day, (aged 91), American film and television writer who wrote for numerous series, many of them westerns. She was co-nominated for a Hugo Award for the screenplay of the film *The Black Hole*.



February 15

Pat Derby, (aged 70), British-born American animal trainer, who trained animals for the CBS television series *Lassie*, *Gentle Ben* and *Daktari* and the NBC series *Flipper*, using "affection methods" that avoided causing pain for the animal. She later became an animal rights campaigner.

February 16

Harald Siepermann, (aged 50), German animator and character designer, whose first feature film credit was for the 1988 movie, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, in which he worked as a sketch artist. He continued to work for Walt Disney Animation Studios, focusing on character design, for many of the Disney's animated features, including *Mulan* in 1998, *Tarzan* in 1999, *The Emperor's New Groove* in 2000, *Treasure Planet* in 2002, *Brother Bear* in 2003, and the 2007 live action film, *Enchanted*.



February 17

Richard Briers, (aged 79), English actor, best known as Tom Good in the BBC sitcom *The Good Life* and as Martin in *Ever Decreasing Circles*. In 1987, he appeared as the principal villain in the Doctor Who serial *Paradise Towers*. He also played Smee in the 2003 live action film of *Peter Pan*. He played many other roles, and did a surprising amount of serious stage acting, including a lot of Shakespeare. He certainly was one of those actors you really remember.



February 19

Robert Coleman Richardson, (aged 75), American physicist, specialising in sub-millikelvin temperature studies of helium-3, winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1996.

February 21

Raymond Cusick, (aged 84), British TV designer best known for designing the Daleks, for *Doctor Who*. He joined the BBC in 1960 as a staff designer and was responsible for the set design of many Doctor Who stories, creating not just futuristic settings but also historical sets and dioramas.



February 25

Bob Godfrey, (aged 91), British animator, best known for the children's cartoon series *Roobarb* (1974) and *Henry's Cat* (1982-93). He also produced a BAFTA and Academy award-winning short film *Great* (1975), a tongue-in-cheek biography of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

February 26

Allan B. Calhamer, (aged 81), American boardgame inventor, creator of the board game *Diplomacy*, which he first published in 1959.

February 28

Jan Howard Finder, (aged 73), American science fiction writer, filker, hostelling tour guide, costumer, and fan, aka "Wombat". He was a guest of honour at the 1993 ConFrancisco, and was noted for his organized hostelling tours of science-fiction and fantasy related sites, such as to "Middle-earth" - meaning New Zealand.



March 1

Bruce Reynolds, (aged 81), British criminal, who infamously masterminded the 1963 Great Train Robbery. At the time it was Britain's largest robbery, netting GB£2,631,684.

March 7

Alan Smith, (aged 95), British World War II Spitfire fighter ace, who was Wing Commander Douglas Bader's wingman.



Kenny Ball, (aged 82), English jazz trumpeter, bandleader, lead trumpet player and vocalist in Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen.

March 8

Jürg Marmet, (aged 85), Swiss mountaineer who became the third person to summit Mount Everest in 1956.

Compiled by Jacqui Smith

March 13

Malachi Throne, (aged 84), American actor was a popular guest star on many television series of the 1960s and 1970s. He voiced the Keeper in *ST:TOS The Cage*, and played Commodore José I. Mendez in *The Menagerie* (yes, that does amount to two parts in the same episode) and Pardek, a Romulan senator, in *ST:TNG Unification*. He played numerous roles in various Irwin Allen series, was the villain False Face in the ABC *Batman* TV series, but his biggest role was as Noah Bain, Mundy's boss in *It Takes a Thief*. Later, he was Prime Minister Malachi, a high official of the Centauri government, in *B5 The Coming of Shadows*.



March 14

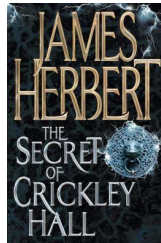
Ieng Sary, (aged 87), Vietnamese-born Cambodian politician, co-founder of the Khmer Rouge—he died of heart disease while on trial for crimes against humanity.



March 16
Frank Thornton, (aged 92), British actor, best known for playing Captain Peacock in *Are You Being Served?* and as Truly in *Last of the Summer Wine*. His death leaves Nicholas Smith (Mr. Rumpole) as the surviving member of the original cast of *Are You Being Served?*.

March 20

James Herbert, (aged 69), English horror writer with several best-sellers to his name, including *The Rats*, *The Fog*, and *The Secret of Crickley Hall* (which was adapted for television and recently screened on UKTV).



George Lowe, (aged 89), New Zealand-born British mountaineer, explorer and film director, who was the last surviving participant of the 1953 British Mount Everest Expedition.

March 21

Rick Hautala, (aged 64), American speculative fiction and horror writer, awarded the Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement for 2011. His works included the Jenna Blake *Body of Evidence* series, the best-selling *Night Stone* and the anthology *Bedbugs*.



March 22

Derek Watkins, (aged 68), British trumpeter, who played on every James Bond soundtrack—and many others besides, including *Gladiator*, *Johnny English*, *Superman* and *Superman II*.

March 28

Richard Griffiths, (aged 65), British actor, known for his portrayal of Vernon Dursley in the *Harry Potter* films, Henry Crabbe in *Pie in the Sky*, Vogon Jeltz in the film version of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and King George II in *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*. He was awarded an OBE for services to theatre, and a number of awards for his role in the play *The History Boys*.



March 29

Jim Mees, (aged 57), American set designer who worked for 14 years on Star Trek (TNG, VOG, and ENT), responsible for much of the “look” of those shows. He was awarded an Emmy Award for Outstanding Art Direction for a Series in 1990 for his work on the TNG episode *Sins of the Father*.

April 2

Frédéric Aristidès aka Fred, (aged 82), French comics artist and comic book creator in the Franco-Belgian comics tradition. He is best known for his fantasy series *Philémon*.

Jane Henson, (aged 78), American puppeteer, co-founder of *The Muppets*, wife of puppeteer Jim Henson.



April 3

George Gladir, (aged 87), American comic book writer who wrote stories for several *Archie Comics* titles, and co-created the character *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, who went on to have her own TV series.

April 4

Carmine Infantino, (aged 87), American comic book artist and editor who was a major force in the Silver Age of Comic Books, drawing *Human Torch*, *Angel*, *Black Canary*, and *Batman*, but was most well-known for his work on the *Flash*. He later became editorial director and then publisher at DC, and was inducted into the Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2000.



Roger Ebert, (aged 70),

American film critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times* from 1967 until his death.. In 1975, he was the first film critic to win the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism, and in 2005 became the first film critic to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

April 7

Sir Kenneth Murray, (aged 82), British molecular biologist, whose team of developed the vaccine against hepatitis B which was the first vaccine made using genetic engineering.

Uncorked

By Broderick Wells

It was just about the end of March, and there was a small thing of interest in town: a beer festival. Naturally, I went. But not alone. No no no no no. I had the ever redoubtable Librarian and a certain BJ. First order of business was meeting up, which wasn't a problem, seeing as the beer fest was quite close to Britomart train station. We had only a short wait. Then waiting for it the festival to kick off: we were fashionably early. It turned out the Librarian and BJ had extra tickets, but they were able to scalp these for only the cover price. Good work, Ladies. Then the doors opened and us hordes descended like unto the wolf on the fold.

There were quite a few lovely drops to be had. We started off pacing ourselves, taking careful notes, assessing the quality of each beer. The usual thing when hand crafted product is being assessed by experts. That lasted for a couple of hours. By then, we three had had over half a dozen beers and were starting get moderately lubricated. I did find an excellent ginger beer (Crafty Beggars, was it?), non-alcoholic and reminiscent of crystallised ginger. But all this malty, hoppy goodness put us in mind of lunch!

Now, the beer people were inside the Cloud, and the food guys were outside, so we had to find the right doors, and track down the vendor of interest and purchase comestibles. I don't remember exactly what I had, but I found this absolutely delightful avocado chutney chilli sauce. Lip-smacking good, it was, and there was enough beer in my glass to kill the subtle afterburn. The food was almost as interesting as the beer, and there was a good selection.

Back inside, we got a free show of a comedian (not the usual impromptu street theatre of Friday night) who was passable, and more beer. At some point I decided I needed a new hat, and came away with a lovely Homburg. The rest of the afternoon passed in an alcoholic haze of beer, music and sun. This was obviously before daylight saving and the drought finished. But if ever you get the chance to go to a beer festival, do try it: there is more on offer than just beer. There was cider too!



Kit-Kat wants treat! Wants treat now!

Cats in SPACE!

A little quiz about some favourite felines in science fiction and fantasy...

- The archetypal fantasy cat has got to be the Cheshire Cat from Alice in Wonderland. What was the last part of the Cheshire Cat to disappear?
 - Eyes
 - Grin
 - Tail
 - Whiskers
- His real name is Zunar-J-5/9 Doric-4-7, and he is known as "The Cat from Outer Space". What did the humans call him?
 - George
 - Kitty
 - Jake
 - Tiddles
- In which SF author's work might you read about Barque Cats?
 - Andre Norton
 - Anne McCaffrey
 - Marion Zimmer Bradley
 - Mercedes Lackey
- Which "Harry Potter" character owns a cat named Crookshanks?
 - Harry
 - Hermione
 - Neville
 - Ron
- What is the name of the feline alien race in Larry Niven's "Known Space"?
 - Caitain
 - Hani
 - Kilrathi
 - Kzinti

6. The Cat in Red Dwarf is descended from Dave Lister's pregnant pet cat. What was the name of this ancestral feline?

- A. Dracula
- B. Frankenstein
- C. Jekyll
- D. Nosferatu

7. In which SF movie is there a cat named Jonesy?

- A. Alien
- B. Matrix
- C. Predator
- D. Terminator

8. Which science fiction character was adopted by a treecat named Nimitz?

- A. Honor Harrington
- B. John Geary
- C. Miles Vorkosigan
- D. Nicholas Seafort

9. What is the name of Data's cat in Star Trek: the Next Generation?

- A. Isis
- B. Chester
- C. Porthos
- D. Spot

10. Which steampunk character has a feline companion called Krosop?

- A. Agatha Heterodyne
- B. Bangladesh Dupree
- C. Klaus Wulfenbach
- D. Othar Tryggvasse



Review of Oz the Great and Powerful aka Down the rabbit hole with Pooh and The Flopsy Bunnies.

Directed by Sam Raimi
 Produced by Joe Roth
 Screenplay by Mitchell Kapner, David Lindsay-Abaire
 Story by Mitchell Kapner
 Based on the Oz series by L. Frank Baum
 Starring James Franco, Mila Kunis, Rachel Weisz, Michelle Williams
 Reviewed by Maree Pavletich

Now don't get me wrong, I quite like the Wizard of Oz and I quite liked this movie prequel too. But I think you REALLY have to have liked the original to "get" this one and be patient enough to wait for the sequel, which I assume, is when things get moving...? The visuals were stunning, I mean I know there is no excuse for bad SFX these days but wow.... awesome. The story and direction was a bit thin in the same way that the blankets are starting to get a bit thin on your side as these nights get colder and somebody starts hogging them....but I digress. I realise that this movie was directed in the same spirit as the original, i.e. you couldn't do a Hansel and Gretel with Glinda whipping out an AK47 from the end of her wand, but it was curiously bloodless. Yes, I know China Town got smashed, but you only saw the aftermath. Rachel Weiss was fantastic as the evil one, you just never trusted her, until Mila Kunis got bent out of shape by OZ. I would have liked her to have had more screen time chewing the carpet, as her transformation seemed a bit rushed. Glinda was "good" to the point of "oh, just slap her already-ness" which is what got me thinking and led to this review.

We have become so used to heroes biffing the ungodly until an enormous body count racks up, that if it doesn't happen we feel let down. Like wanting juicy steak and getting served salad—nice, but somehow missing that oomph. I know it's a "kid's movie", but I was hoping that the movie makers would realise that these days we are tougher in our tastes. Tangled was a "kid's movie" so was Shrek, I saw both of those and got the jokes that were put in for the adults watching. Hasn't stopped me buying the new nail polish tie-in to the movie, a riot of colour and gold flecks called, wait for it, "When Monkeys Fly!"

(On reflection, the Smiths have decided to save their movie money and buy the DVD—coming to a club meeting later this year, methinks).

Quiz Answers:

- 1. B. Grin
- 2. C. Jake
- 3. B. Anne McCaffrey
- 4. B. Hermione
- 5. D. Kzinti
- 6. B. Frankenstein
- 7. A. Alien
- 8. A. Honor Harrington
- 9. D. Spot
- 10. C. Agatha Heterodyne

Etiquette and Espionage: Finishing School Book the First

by Gail Carriger

Published by Atom

Supplied by Hachette NZ

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

I have no idea whether Queen Victoria would have found the opening scenes of “Etiquette and Espionage” amusing, but I can assume you that I was most entertained. In fact, I can assure you that the whole novel was quite diverting. Though it must be said that the earlier chapters were stronger than the conclusion, which seemed a little contrived, and not entirely satisfying. Set in 1851, about forty years prior to “Soulless”, it is the story of the decidedly rough around the edges Sophronia Temminnick and her first year at Mademoiselle Geraldine's Finishing Academy for Young Ladies of Quality. “Finishing” in more than one sense of the word, since the curriculum includes skills that have less to do with assignments and more to with assassinations. The plot is centred on a stolen device, and the attempts of various parties to conceal it, copy it, or capture it. This is not simply, as some have stated, a steampunk version of Harry Potter. I suspect its roots lie deeper than that, in those interminable series of children’s books set in boarding schools that I remember from childhood (such as the *Chalet School* and *Jennings*). And, in fact, that suggests that the cover art, which is screaming “YA”, is misleading, and it is. This is a book I would happily give to young girls of ten to twelve years, knowing they’d enjoy it immensely. After all, the heroine is only fourteen. This is a tween novel – not that it can’t be enjoyed by teens or adults, but unlike Carriger’s earlier steampunk novels the whole tone is light, and just a bit fluffy.... cream puff literature, fun, beautifully crafted in its details, but not at all challenging.



Blood of Dragons: Rain Wild Chronicles Book 4

by Robin Hobb

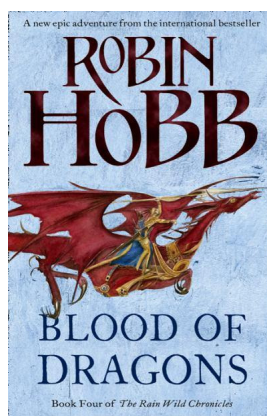
Published by Harper Voyager

Supplied by Harper Collins NZ

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

It is said, “Do not meddle in the affairs of Dragons, for you are crunchy and taste good with ketchup!” – and Hobb is not afraid to let her characters prove this quite literally. There is a scene around p428 where one particularly nasty individual is bitten by a big one in a manner distinctly reminiscent of the fate of a certain lawyer in *Jurassic Park*. Absolutely brilliant!

But if you think that makes this an especially violent novel, you’d be wrong. Hobb does not even go into detail about her climactic battle, but prefers to skip the gory bits, cleverly telling the story through the characters



retelling of events. And it is the climax of not just one book, but of what is described as a four-volume novel, and that resolves issues that have been brewing across more than one series. Yet it works.

As does Hobb’s world. I’m not sure which, if any, of the *Rain Wild Chronicles* I’ve read, though I do remember enjoying all of the *Liveship Traders*. Missing a few books wasn’t really a problem. Hobb draws the reader into her world with consummate skill. No dodgy continuity here, but solid plot development instead. That same skill is applied to the construction of that world, and hers are maps that work. Her characters are complex and interesting, and as they evolve and come into conflict they very much drive the story. And as for her dragons... Not since the days of McCaffrey’s best work have dragons been so cool! Suffice it to say that I thoroughly enjoyed “Blood of Dragons” and that I’m tempted to go back and find the earlier books in this series!

The Daylight War

by Peter V Brett

Published by Harper Voyager

Supplied by Harper Collins NZ

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

My initial reaction to the arrival of “The Daylight War” in the mail was “It’s a brick”, and at 802 pages and a good 5 cm thick, it very definitely is. It’s taken me a while to read it as well, because unlike some, I don’t find Brett’s style especially compelling. Don’t get me wrong, the man can string words together well enough, his prose is nicely descriptive, and his characters are rich and complex. And he does have some clever ideas, notably in the way his magic works, an innovative use for polyhedral dice, and his use of the natural alloy electrum as the “magic metal” as opposed to the invented materials we commonly see in fantasy novels. But... there are problems with the structure both of the world Brett has created and of the novel itself. Brett’s map doesn’t have a scale, but travel times suggest this isn’t a huge area, so is this “the last bastion of humanity” – or is there a “rest of the world”? His geography doesn’t make much sense. Rivers don’t just split randomly as they flow down from the mountains, and deserts form in the rain shadow of mountains, not simply to the south of forests. Brett has three societies in conflict. To the south there is a desert people with an “Arabian Nights” culture, to the north is a wild western medieval people inhabiting temperate forests and grasslands, and then there are the alien corelings who are the principal antagonist in the series. Where the corelings come from isn’t clear, though there are hints that their appearance caused the downfall of an earlier more technological civilisation. However, this can’t be our world, simply because nowhere is there any geography, physical or social, that remotely matches. The novel itself doesn’t flow that well either, mainly because the narrative frequently jumps both in place and in timeframe, something that I found quite disconcerting, and forcing me to keep checking the chapter heading to figure out when it was set.

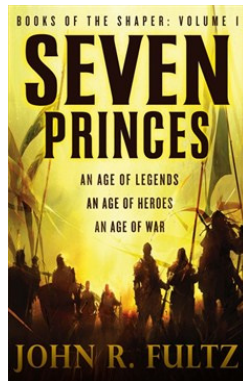


If I'd been the editor, I'd have sent the manuscript back for a good solid re-write with a view to straightening out the narrative, and losing a whole lot of excess verbiage. Oh, and Brett doesn't believe in "drawing the curtain", so this is an adult novel in both senses of the word. Some of the difficulties I have with "The Daylight War" result from the fact that this is not simply the third book in a series – it's the third part of what is in effect one enormous multi-volume novel. This is a tendency in fantasy writing I find deplorable, and Brett's blatant attempt to taunt readers into buying the next book by ending on very literal cliffhanger, frankly isn't going to work on this reader. He has not succeeded in getting me interested enough to care, and I have better (and shorter) books to read...

**Seven Princes:
Shaper Series
Book One**

by John R. Fultz
Published by Orbit
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

There's a hell of a lot happening in this first volume of a new fantasy series, and apart from a couple of brief slow spots, it moves along at a very brisk pace. 'Seven Princes' is a dark fantasy saga that's epic in scope, and at times reads like a big-budget action film unfolding. ...But don't let that analogy put you off; it's not nearly as overblown or daft as the average Michael Bay summer blockbuster. All the classic/traditional elements are here: Heroic warriors & black-hearted villains; Legendary creatures; Magic & sorcery; Romance, war & betrayal; Triumph & tragedy. And blood-soaked carnage on a grand scale... Yep, there's a very high body count in this book, and not just among the supporting cast. No one's safe in this story as the author's not at all afraid to kill off important main characters in order to advance or thicken the plot. That was a refreshing change, and I found myself really surprised at some characters' unexpected early exits. John Fultz is a writer of comics and that probably explains the almost cinematic style of the narrative at times. That's not a criticism though – it suits the story he's telling and certainly keeps things moving forward. Seven Princes is Fultz's first novel, and occasionally that shows, mainly in the pacing, and in not getting to know some of the characters or places as much as we should. There's enough happening in Seven Princes to comfortably fill a couple of novels, and it would have been nice to see the story given at least another couple of hundred pages or so, just to let the world and its characters breathe a little more deeply. Fultz is a storyteller who knows how to spin a good yarn. Sure, it mightn't be the most original fantasy story around (if such a thing even exists now) but it uses the familiar elements well, and it's an entertaining read. Seven Princes won't be to everyone's tastes to be sure, but if you don't mind your heroic fantasy sprinkled with horror and seasoned with graphic & gory violence, then this is definitely worth a look.



Cattra's Legacy

by Anna MacKenzie
Published by Longacre
Supplied by Random House NZ
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

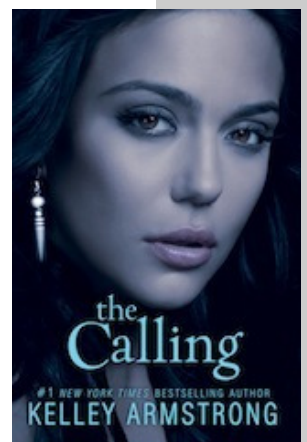
Risha lives a simple life, herding goats in the mountains with her father, Palon. Shunned in her village as an outsider, when Palon dies she is turned out of the cottage they shared. Going through his possessions she finds letters and a name from another city. She leaves the village with a group of traders, determined to find out about her mother. The journey provides more danger than she expected and she has to disguise herself as a boy. Bandits are not the only danger Risha faces, as finding who to trust can be dangerous. Caught up in political intrigue and having to hide from those who want to kill her, Risha slowly finds the truth about her heritage. The plot follows along classic lines and is full of action, moving at a quick pace so is never boring. The heroine, Risha, is a strong character who doesn't sit round wringing her hands and waiting for rescue, preferring to rescue herself. She develops into a strong leader and strategic thinker and grows throughout the story. This is a wonderful book, well written and hard to put down. I read it in two days, only putting it down as I needed sleep. I think this story is fantastic and a possible SJV contender. I'm eagerly awaiting the next stage in Risha's journey.



**The Calling:
Darkness Rising Book 2**

by Kelley Armstrong
Published by Atom
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

Maya and friends are on a helicopter being evacuated from a forest fire. They realise they are being kidnapped just before the helicopter crashes. The group are forced to trek through the woods to safety, using their various abilities to help them survive. But someone is after them.... Pursued by a mysterious people and a man claiming to be Maya's birth father, the group of friends are hunted and picked off one by one. Maya is a skin-walker, able to change into a cougar, an ability that has been bred into her by the manipulation of genes. The others in the group have supernatural abilities too, that are the result of genetic manipulation. This was fast paced, exciting, with a lot of action. I had to go read the first in the trilogy, *The Gathering*, after reading this. These books should be read in order to allow a slow build-up of action and answers, but enough background is given to jump straight in. It took me a third of the book before I twigged to who was chasing them and the other Kelley Armstrong series they are from. Once I figured it out, a lot of things made sense. I look forward to the next book in the Darkness Rising trilogy. fun series I'd recommend for teenagers and adults.



Au Contraire 2013 will be the 34th National Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention, and the second Au Contraire convention.

Where: Wellington

When : 12th to 14th of July 2013
(last weekend of university holidays)

Venue: Quality Hotel,
Upper Cuba Street

**Guests of Honour:
Jennifer Fallon**

Jennifer Fallon is the author of 15 full-length novels, and a number of published short stories. In addition to her own fantasy series - the Demon Child trilogy, the Hythrun Chronicles, the Second Sons trilogy, the Tide Lords quadrilogy, and the Rift Runners series - she has written both a tie-in novel and short fiction for the TV series Stargate SG-1, an official Zorro story for Disney, a novella for the Legends of Australian Fantasy anthology, and has her own superhero - the Violet Valet.



**Fan Guest of Honour:
Anna Klein**

The Fan Guest of Honour for 2013 has been instrumental in the development of both the Auckland and the wider national live action roleplaying community. She has been a driving force behind the New Zealand Live Action Roleplaying Society, a funding and advisory organisation for the hobby. Anna has also led the organisation of Chimera, the original Larp convention in New Zealand.



Charity:
Wellington Women's Refuge



WOMEN'S REFUGE®

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This Month:

- BOOK** Monday April 22nd
(at Marie Williams')
- SPACE** At Chez Smith
Friday 3rd May at 7 pm
- MEETING** At Chez Smith
Friday 3rd May at 7:30 pm

Next Quarterly Meeting:

Wednesday 15th May, 2013, 7:30 pm
Auckland Horticultural Centre,
990 Great North Road,
Western Springs



Upcoming Events:

July 12-14th 2013
Au Contraire 2013
34th New Zealand National SF Convention
<http://www.aucontraire.org.nz/index.php>