



FRANK RAYETTA



Issue Cinque - May 2010

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Musings from Under the Mountain

Listen to the falling rain... it's raining, it's pouring... and the cat is snoring... Well, not actually snoring, but she's created herself a nest in the central hollow of a bean-bag, and is snoozing contentedly. It seems that winter has finally arrived, just as we've finally gotten around to booking our flights to Australia for the WorldCon....

I was saddened to hear of the recent death of Frank Frazetta—another icon of SF and Fantasy leaves us to go to that great rocket ship in the sky. Now, while I'd have to say that his style wasn't my favourite—I'm a Julie Bell and Boris fan myself—but that doesn't mean that I don't admire and respect his work. I also respect the recognition he has received. Few of his paintings have been sold, and those that have, have commanded serious money. "Conan the Conqueror" sold in 2009, for a cool million \$US. That said, as usual, the "serious art critics" do not appear to have ever respected Frazetta's work—any more than they do that of any other fantasy artist. It's the same right across the spectrum of artistic endeavour. If the people like it, and especially if it's genre, the critics despise it and ignore it. There is this elitism in the arts, that makes it easier to get public money for obscure projects that real people think are rubbish—and when it comes to the visual arts, re-arranged litter is exactly what they are!

Big recognition and fancy prizes go to books that few people read because they actually enjoy reading them. Authors don't want to be seen as genre... I actually read Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses". It was basically urban fantasy. Not very good fantasy, at that. But the critics liked it, because it wasn't a "fantasy novel". Go figure.

In classical music at least, composers have finally realized that there is no point in writing music that nobody wants to hear, mainly because that doesn't get bums on seats for struggling orchestras. Or pay the bills. Maybe the rest of the creative arts might eventually get the idea, if government agencies hand out money to real artists, and not to the creators of donkeys in dunnies...

Which brings me back to Frank Frazetta. One of the great artistic talents of the twentieth century. We will miss him.

Jacqui Smith

Ps.... Thanks for all those belated contributions. If you don't see it here, don't worry, I'm already planning next issue, and it'll be there.

From the Cramped Office

Damn, it's one day before the meeting and yet again, the Presidential address has yet to be written. I could blame any one of a number of factors, but in the end it all comes down to me procrastinating. The problem is that I've been reading too much, working too much and goofing off too much. On the plus side, the Presidential entourage went to *Spamalot* at the Hawkins' Theatre in Papakura. Most amusing, especially when it transpired that one of the Presidential aides was discovered to be hiding the Holy Grail up his fundament.

In my university readings, I've discovered that it is almost impossible to escape SF/Fantasy authors: Connie Willis, Samuel R. Delaney, and Ursula Le Guin have all been quoted, and there are still three weeks of the first semester to go. I wonder who we'll meet next. Definitely not what I expected, especially as I'm studying History (the pompous version of history, replete with footnotes, bibliography and multiple revisions and interpretations).

Finally, there's the need to administer the club, and the meetings. Do you guys want more structured meetings, a video group, a writers group, a pool party? Run your ideas past the crew and we'll do our best to co-ordinate your aspirations other likeminded individuals. Who knows, one day maybe the editor will be fending off manuscripts worthy of publication.

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Silver Borne

By Patricia Briggs
ISBN 978-1-84149-799-0
Published by Orbit
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

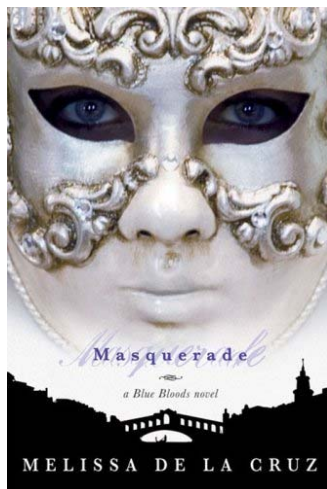
Mercy, a coyote shape shifter and mechanic, has trouble with the wolf pack accepting her through her mating with the pack Alpha. She also has to keep an old friend from losing his mind, as well as being hunted by a mysterious fae who wants to have an object of great power that Mercy possesses. The trouble is, Mercy has no idea what that object is.....

Most series have the same old tired plots and after several books, grow predictable. Not this story, which is the fifth in the Mercy Thompson series. Patricia Briggs has delivered another exciting, fast-paced read which has new twists, keeping the series enjoyable. An excellent read for urban fantasy fans which could be read as a standalone, as just enough basic background information is given to grasp things. I would recommend reading the whole series though, as well as the Alpha & Omega series, for a better grasp of understanding of events and because they are fantastic reads!

Masquerade

By Melissa de la Cruz
ISBN 978-1-905654-77-2
Published by Orbit/Atom
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

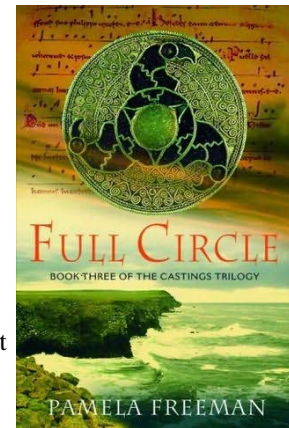
Continuing the story on from the first book, the heroine, Schuyler, is in Venice searching for her grandfather. She is accompanied by her best friend/human Conduit, Oliver, and they need to find gramps as he is the only one that knows how to defeat Silver Bloods. The story is told from the views of the three main characters, Schuyler, Bliss, and Mimi, as they throw fabulous parties, get discovered by modelling agencies, learn how to use their powers effectively, and keep hunting the forces of evil. A new character is introduced, Kingsley, and more is revealed about Roanoke and how they checked if a Blue Blood had been corrupted and turned into a Silver Blood. The mysterious disappearance in the 1800s of a Blue Blood, Maggie Sanford, is told in excerpts from newspapers, that are scattered throughout the book. This is another enjoyable read and felt compelled to keep turning pages to find out what happens next. It is a book suitable for teenage girls to read as it doesn't have any raunchy scenes.



Full Circle: Book Three of the Castings Trilogy

By Pamela Freeman
Orbit, 371pp
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

There are two kinds of book series in this world... those that are truly series, and those that are actually one book spread across multiple volumes. I'd figured out that "Castings" was one of the latter from reading book one, and that I'd better find a copy of book two before reviewing book three, or I'd really lose the plot. The library supplied, and I was glad I did read "Deep Water" before "Full Circle" or it really would have been confusing. "Full Circle" is, of course, mainly about bringing things to a satisfactory conclusion, laying the dead to rest, about sacrifice, and about a new stone. That stone changes the word, its name is evenness and it brings about balance. And this is a very balanced book in many ways. The resolution isn't the big magical showdown you might expect for the end of a traditional fantasy trilogy, but it's very satisfying nevertheless. There is definitely a new and inventive mood in the fantasy genre these days, and I rather like it.



Gears of War: Jacinto's Remnant

By Karen Traviss
Orbit, p400
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

Since reading "Aspho Fields" I've had the opportunity to chat to an adult player of the "Gears of War" game. He told me that the one thing he didn't like about video game spin-off books was when all they did was to repeat the story of the game. Assuming he's not the only one, then that's another thing that Traviss has got right with the "Gears of War" books. "Aspho Fields" dealt mainly with events prior to the setting of the game interspersed with events occurring between the game and its sequel. "Jacinto's Remnant" is mainly set after the conclusion of "Gears of War 2", dealing with events after the flooding of Jacinto, following the survivors' attempts to build themselves a new home, while fending off the last of the Locust. This is interspersed with the story of how the Hammer of Dawn was used to destroy most of the Locust infesting Sera... and a lot of the people too. This novel seems somehow more relaxed than "Aspho Fields", with Traviss having a lot more freedom as she leaves the storyline of the game behind her, and starts to explore what happens next. The significant issues of how the Stranded came to be, and what is to be done about them, now the Locust are gone, are the focus here. And it makes an interesting and exciting war story, even for those of us who haven't played the game.



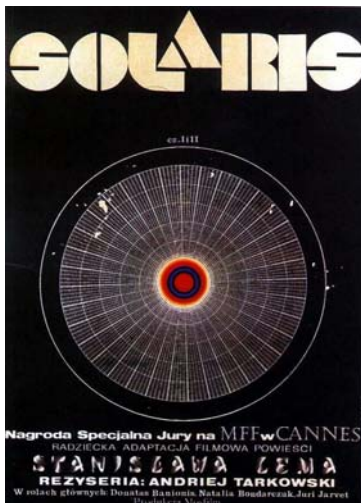
Books
Provided
by
Hatchett

Reviews
by
Jan
Butterworth
and
Jacqui
Smith

Uncorked Broderick Wells

Finally booted that scoundrel Litten off the computer. Just because he owns it doesn't mean he has to hog it. Haven't made it to Daybreakers - was it any good? And are there any other new Scifi or Fantasy films out recently? They don't have to be in English neither. I quite enjoy the mild frisson of joy at recognising a foreign word as I read a film. Some of my favourite Scifi films are not originally in English - Metropolis, Accion Mutante, Delicatessen, all non-English language films.

Actually, there is quite a significant back catalogue of films I would like to see, if time were no consideration. I don't know the names off hand, but Tarkovsky's Solaris is an obvious contender. I suspect there would be a fair amount of reading involved. Not because I have a penchant for foreign (as opposed New Zealand) films, but the recent output from Hollywood has soured me toward American productions. So I guess I'll have to troll through other language films and try to avoid their dross.



This also applies to TV presentations, though here the Americans aren't quite so appalling. Either I haven't had time, worked a night job, or lived where reception was so terrible the only thing one could see was snow. Certainly, I've missed all of the new series of Dr Who (and I mean since 2000), the British Life on Mars, Primeval, Torchwood and a host of other series too numerous to mention. I suppose I'll either have to live on borrowed DVDs or surreptitious downloads. Of course, I'll have to find a few more minutes in the day to watch all these moving images.

But then comes the next tricky decision - do I buy a new flat screen TV and blu-ray DVD player, or should I just watch them on the old box lurking in the front room? Decisions, decisions. I think I need a drink to help clear my mind while I ponder the options.



OBITS

(in no particular order)

Frank Frazetta, age 82
Artist, nuff said...



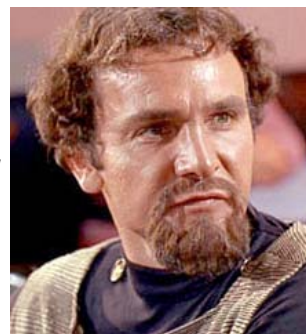
Lena Horne, age 92
Actor, singer



Sharon Webb, age 74
Writer of the Terra Tarkington stories for Asimov's

Michael Pataki, age 72

Actor, including "I didn't say the ENTERPRISE should be hauling garbage...I said the ENTERPRISE should be hauled away AS garbage..." - The Trouble with Tribbles



Lynn Redgrave
Actor

Peter O'Donnell, age 90
Creator of Modesty Blaise

Guenter Wendt, age 86
Pad leader for the NASA moon missions. John Glenn kindly nicknamed Wendt "der Führer of der Launch Pad" for his insistence on procedure. "There is no reason to say I am narrow-minded. Just do it my way and you will have no problem at all." - Wendt



Carl Macek
Converter of the "Robotech" and "Lensman" animes to American

THE PACIFIC

Ten part HBO Miniseries.

This was conceived as a counterpoint to HBO's earlier "Band of Brothers", but set in the Pacific theatre of Operations, as opposed to the European Theatre. "Band of Brothers" was based on the book of the same name by Stephen Ambrose, and followed the story of Easy Company, 501 PIR, 101st Airborne Division in Europe. All were volunteers.

The Pacific is based on no fewer than four books: "(At Peleliu and Okinawa) With the Old Breed" By Eugene B Sledge, "Helmet for My Pillow" by Robert Leckie and additional materials from "Red Blood, Black Sand" by Chuck Tatum (Iwo-Jima) and "China Marine" by Eugene B Sledge. As a side note, some material from "Red Blood, Black Sand" was also used in the recent Clint Eastwood Movie duology, "Flags of our Fathers" and "Letters From Iwo Jima." And many of the young soldiers were draftees, not volunteers.

Again the Executive Production is by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg and much of the same production team as "Band of Brothers" including several of the Directors used then. The best known actor in the ensemble cast is William Sadler (The villain in "Die hard 2" and Death in "Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey"), Playing Marine Corps General Lewis B "Chesty" Puller – although he is a Lt-Colonel in episodes 1 to 4. The major plot follows the stories of Robert Leckie and Eugene B Sledge with a major subplot being the tragic story of Sgt John Basilone, beginning immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbour and following the survivors into their early life on their

return home.

So, Is it any good. Well, first off it does strongly remind you of band of Brothers, in the style and story telling, but that's a good thing because you get immediately involved in the whole thing.

Special note: The main Title Credit sequence is one of the most artistic and amazing I have ever seen, and it fits the theme and story perfectly, even more so than "Band of Brothers" credit sequence did for that miniseries. It's not an easy watch, some scenes are truly horrific and very intense - viewer discretion is advised. But there are some oddly hilarious moments of what I can only describe as gallows humour. On Guadalcanal, one young marine fesses up that he has only just celebrated his 18th birthday the week before as they set out on a jungle patrol. The others begin to sing "Happy Birthday" to him... but verse two is... just a leetle beet deefereent... "How F^%\$^ed are you now? How F%\$^ed are you Now? Your F^%\$^ed beyond recognition You're really F&&^%ed Now!"

And if you think the combat scenes on Guadalcanal are hard to watch, be prepared. Peleiu is worse and Iwo Jima and Okinawa are some of the most intense battles I have ever seen on film. And I've seen a more than a few. This is a MUST BUY miniseries when it gets released on DVD. Oh, and be aware TVNZ are cutting the episodes by up to 15 minutes to fit in all the ads, the BASTARDS!

Do yourself a favour and watch "The Pacific", and remember that Guadalcanal Island is about the same distance from New Zealand as Brisbane, Australia. Just to the North, not the north west.

8.8/10 Very Impressive Film-making, deserving of awards.

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Time for your Upgrade...

I have been a user of Microsoft Windows XP since 2002. I strongly resisted Vista on its release about three years ago on several grounds, the most important being Microsoft's integration of DRM (Digital Rights Management) into the operating system. This alone made Vista unrealistic for many users. What were they thinking? How could they, in their wildest imaginings, ever have thought that putting in a self-checking routine that operated at **30 times per SECOND**, "would not have any significant impact on computer & operating system performance"? (Microsoft c2005) The plain and simple truth was that Vista ran slower than XP in any and all circumstances, even if XP was in a slower platform. But worse was to follow... Including DRM into Vista meant that something like 80% of all current PC hardware in the market would require a major upgrade, or a system replacement in order to be able to meet the MINIMUM Vista system requirements. And an executive at Microsoft had to wonder why the only Vista sales they seemed to make were in the NEW PC hardware and Laptop bracket. But something even more horrific followed soon after... a STUNNING 65% of those sales were being accompanied by the sale of an XP OS. Which is a way of saying the consumers were purchasing a brand new Vista Laptop or PC and then reverting the OS to back XP!!!

And how did Microsoft react? They panicked, announcing that sales of XP OS were to be suspended and support would be withdrawn within 12 months. That went down like a lead balloon and for the first time in MS corporate history their stock price did not just fluctuate, it dropped a frightening 10%! MS had to cancel both announcements, publicly announcing that XP would remain on general sale (for at least 2 years more) and would be supported until "At least 2012" Rumour has it that after many long and acrimonious meetings Microsoft finally got the message. Vista had been botched from the start, and the biggest error had been the DRM. (Microsoft went ahead and released Vista in a seriously faulty state – which showed the number of the bug fixes Vista need with two months of its official release. Microsoft called it Service Pack One—their users called it the BugFix Compendium.)

So, after the dust settled and people got down to using Vista and XP kept right on chugging along, handily outselling its successor OS, Microsoft then turned their attention to Longhorn, the next step from Vista. If the first major version of Windows was 3.1, then Windows 95/98 would be Windows 4, (the less said about ME the better,) XP would be Windows 5 and Vista Windows 6. Let's call this **Windows 7**, went up the glad cry!

So, now we have **Windows 7**. Is it the new XP, or just a better-looking Vista? And that brings us the crux of this article. What is Windows 7 like? Does it work? Is it easier to use? Are the fancy bells and whistles actually any good? What about upgrades and installing? Or is it Vista in new clothing? I shall endeavour to enlighten you, perhaps persuade you that the time has indeed come for a change in your OS.

Installation: I obtained an OEM version to install on my Home built system. The installation was fast and vice free, requiring the user to enter (1) the Windows CD Key,

(2) name in full and (3) optionally, a password. There follows a 40 minute wait, the system reboots once and then you have Windows 7 running. On my system Windows 7 correctly recognised ALL my hardware, including two network cards, a scanner and printer, and then loaded valid drivers for all of the different cards, drivers and chipsets. Now that is a trouble-free install! I downloaded the latest Nvidia Drivers for my 1 Gb 9800 video card and installed those. Windows 7 incorporated them and began using them ON THE FLY, no reboot required! That is something Windows has never done before, not even using Vista!

So for ease of installation and speed and efficiency, **Windows 7 gets 9/10**. The last Windows OS that installed in 40 minutes was a CD of Windows 95, which, at 500Mb, is about 1/10 the size of Windows 7!
Features of Windows 7: Where to start? How to explain what some features do when I'm still finding out myself? We shall start with the most obvious, the Looks and the Start Button/Menu.

Looks: Windows 7 uses the admittedly very pretty Aero Interface of Vista, with a small twist, the frames of the windows are translucent and colourable—"Glass." It means you can kind of see through it. It's very nice, certainly nicer than the standard XP multicolour blotches. I haven't switched off "Glass" though, Ooooooh, Pretty! But it took me about four minutes to find out how to switch it off. Windows 7 then reverts to the standard grey Win 98 style, and that is a comfort. It means you will be able to use it at once without having to think twice about what a button might mean.

Start button/Menu: Look for the large round windows flag symbol in the lower left of the screen. That's the new start button. Pressing it will bring up the Menu. In XP the start menu was configurable so the user could either revert to the older 98/200 menu or use the rather confusing XP style menu. That is no longer possible. You get to use the new Start menu only. Configuration is via a right click, or the Personalization option in control panel (one of the standard menu options and easy to use). On the bright side you can configure it to better suit your ideas of ease of use, hiding or adding items at will, so on balance, it's an improvement over both XP and Vista there. I have grown to appreciate the design work and logic that has gone into it.

A less wonderful thing is the double check of the DEP (Data Execution Prevention) utility introduced with Vista & XP service pack 3. It's still there, still damn annoying and the most likely cause of the user putting a fist into the monitor. You can switch it off, but then you get warnings about it being turned off!! I'm afraid you will need to get used to it. I know it's there to deal with malware and virus infection, but it could be done a bit more subtly. When I double click an icon, I don't need it to ask if I meant to do that! Surely running an installed program need not be included in the parameters for malware!

Ease of Use: Here Windows 7 does shine. In this area Microsoft finally are getting to rival Apple's OS with features and stability. The new Start menu has a group of links on the right hand column, all to do with the user's access and control over the computer and OS. You will find Control panel, Printers, Downloads, Music, Pictures and Documents and others in this column and all are readily accessible. No more hunting through your desktop and menus....

“My Computer” has gone, replaced by the more impersonal “Computer” icon, but the options remain the same. Similarly “Network Neighbourhood” is now just “Network” and there is considerable reorganization therein. You now have access to network mapping and linking, and all the options are streamlined and functionality vastly improved over the old XP networking. Indeed, much network functionality is now automated completely, as close to plug’n’play as it seems to be possible to get. That is a major Plus!

“My Documents” is now a subset of a larger personal folder and insider there you’ll find folders labeled Downloads, Documents etc. All of these, as well as any other data folder can be linked into “Libraries” which can then be defined as either “Private” or Public (meaning shared). The implementation of sharing has also been refined, with uses able to read/copy and some selected users able to modify/delete any shared file. This is definable right down to individual files.

Gadgets: These are desktop positioned programs which are accessible directly only from the desktop. There are clocks, a wallpaper downloader and a gadget for daemon tools. Available are things like a world clock (want to know the time in Abu Dhabi?), a currency converter (using up to the minute exchange rates!) and a whole host of others, from the sublime to the.. how about a daily Irish joke? Gadgets run in the background so do not use excess CPU. (I have a quad core Athlon.) Which brings me to a last important point - choosing between 32 and 64 bit Windows. If you have a dual core CPU or better, then you will likely have a 64 bit processor.

If you still run and single core or an early dual core then you must CHECK to see which it is. They come in Both 32 and 64 bit variants. This is important as Windows 7 is available as a 32 bit OS or a 64 bit OS. If you have a 64 bit processor, then get a 64 bit version of Windows 7.

Why is this important? To put it simply, 64 bit is the way of the future. By next year there will be no 32 bit CPUs being made. Even 32 bit software will fade out over time, expect to see a badge with either a 64 or a 32 on it on most software packages soon. Some already have it. Most existing software is 32 bit and Windows 7 acknowledges this and handles it very well indeed. This has not always been the case: I installed a 64 bit version of XP onto my system about 18 months ago. The OS itself ran fine, but almost none of my software would run without extensive patching or complex options being enabled. I have to admit I kind of looked twice at Windows 7 because of this one thing. But Microsoft did the work for me...

In your system drive you will find two “Program Files” Directories. The first is just straight “Program Files” but the second is named “Program Files (x86)”. Windows AUTOMATICALLY reads any installing program and redirects ALL 32 bit software into this second (x86) directory. Any program in this directory will be automatically run in 32 bit mode with the correct options. No user intervention required.

If you install any 64 bit software it will go into the standard “Program Files” directory and run in 64 bit mode, able to interact 100% with any 32 bit software, and vice versa the 32 bit software will run in 32 bit mode, and be able to interact 100% with any 64 bit software. THAT is smart, future-proofed and best of all backwards compatible with earlier software. (Oh, and BTW, you can still run individual programs in compatibility mode, from

Vista & XP SP3, right back to Win95/Dos). Phew! I’ll give **Windows 7 of 8.5/10** for Features, Ease of Use, a pretty good mark, considering XP only got 7.5 from me way back when. The mark would have been higher but for the DEP issue.

Stability! Windows has never been as stable (or secure) as either Apple’s OS or any Unix based OS. I’m not going to claim Windows 7 is 100% stable. But what I was able to make Windows XP fall over within two hours on a clean install back in 2002. I made XP Service pack 3 fail in 45 minutes when I upgraded to that. I have had Windows 7 on my system for three weeks now and it took the better part of two weeks to make it fall over. The issue of stability brings up another are where WINDOWS has never really done well – Error handling. Microsoft went all out to improve the Error handling capabilities of Windows 7. They have been largely successful. It can take a while to recognise a software error, but once it does, it will deal with it. Or it will ask you how you want to deal with it.

This is an area where I can say that Microsoft have earned a “well done” from me. Other things I have not yet covered – DirectX 10 and Media player 11– both are included in Windows 7. DX10 especially deserves a look, incorporating the Phys-X engine for outstanding gaming. **7.5/10 for Stability** (compared with the 5.5 for XP, and 9.0 for Unix)

9/10 DX10 - Gamers rejoice in the glory that is DX10
5/10 Media Player 11 - Still nosy and intrusive, hard to disable and still not a great media player at all.

Windows calculator: Special mention for the first real upgrade to one of the oldest programs in Windows: It’s now a full blown, all bells and knobs calculator, with Conversions, Scientific, Mathematical and Navigation options included.

And lastly, we get to the things that sabotaged Vista the most. DRM and the need to Upgrade System requirements. DRM is GONEBURGER! Well, actually they have left an Option in the OS to include a DRM check on Media files, but it is safely buried in the personalisation menus, and is OFF by Default.

Let me be clear: if you are running XP on a 32 bit CPU of more than 1.8 GHz and it is running comfortable fast and you have 1 GB or more of memory, you should be able to run 32 Bit Windows 7 and get similar speed. I would recommend however that you turn off the Aero interface, no matter how good your video card. If you have Vista, you can run Windows 7 easily.

Requirements: 8.5/10 If you have a 64 bit CPU and 1Gb RAM, Windows 7 will fly for you.

Is it worth upgrading to Windows 7? This is the first Windows package that I have actually purchased retail, as opposed to getting either “on the sly” or preinstalled on a Computer. That should tell you that I thought the upgrade would be worthwhile. I confess, it is the FIRST time that any Microsoft OS has actually impressed me.

The scorecard for Window 7 is as follows

Ease:	9/10
Features:	8.8/10
Stability:	7.5/10
DX10	9/10
MP11	5/10
Requirements:	8.5/10
Overall	47.8/60

New Zealand May Board Game Releases

Carson City

Publisher: Eagle Games
 Designer: Xavier Georges
 Ages: 12 +
 No. of Players: 2 – 5
 Playing Time: 90 mins

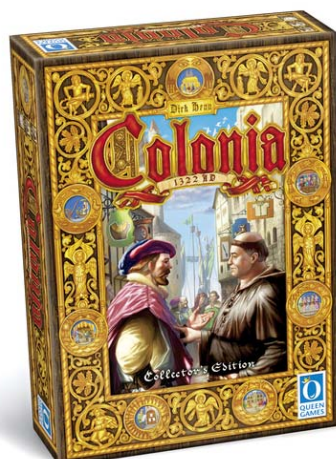
Players are building Carson City through a bit of strategic planning (what character to choose, what actions to take, what tile to place) and a dash of luck with who is going to win the duel when it takes place. This game has received mixed reviews on boardgamegeek, it really depends very much on the person.



Colonia—Collector's Edition

Publisher: Queens Games
 Designer: Dirk Henn
 Ages: 12 +
 No. of Players: 3 – 6
 Playing Time: 120 mins

An auction & worker placement game in which you are a wealthy trading family in the city of Colonia trying to trade your way up to owning the most holy relics (that are your victory points). This game has received mixed reviews on boardgamegeek.



Cornucopia

Publisher: Gryphon Games
 Designers: Carlo A. Rossi & Lorenzo Tarabini
 Ages: 8 +
 No. of Players: 2 – 5
 Playing Time: 45 mins

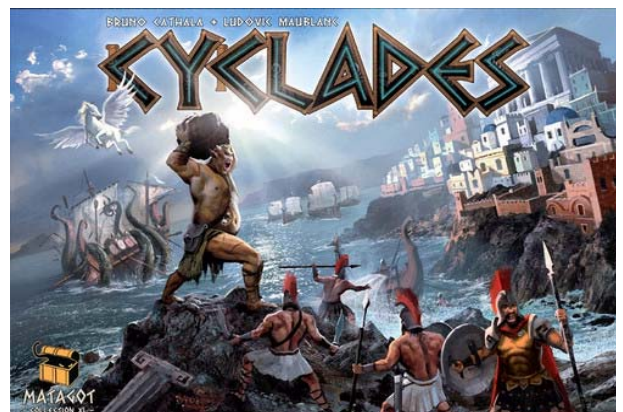
A filler card game in which you are trying to do well collecting the right sets of fruit & vegetables whilst betting on your opponent's success (or failure).



Cyclades

Publisher: Asmodee
 Designer: Bruno Cathala & Ludovic Maublanc
 Ages:
 No. of Players: 2 – 5
 Playing Time: 60 - 90 mins

You are trying to buy the favour of the gods (not just one) to be the first player to build two cities in the Ancient Greek island group known as the Cyclades. This is an empire building game that takes less than an afternoon that seems to be the norm in this genre of game. If I was to have a go at this sort of game my arm could be twisted to try this cause the theme and game mechanics look interesting.

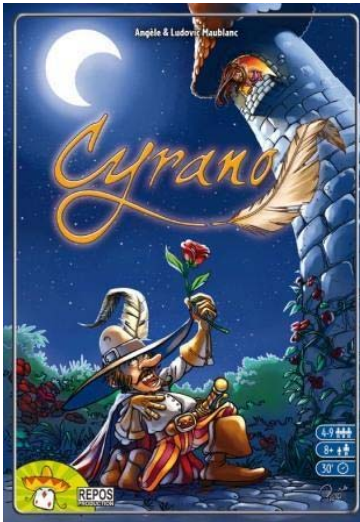


Expansions:

- Dominion: Alchemy
- Summoner Wars: Dwarves vs Goblins
- Summoner Wars: Elves vs Orcs
- Warhammer FRPG: Gathering Storm
- Warhammer LCG: Assault on Ulthua
- Warhammer LCG: Warpstone Chronicles

Cyrano

Publisher: Asmodee
 Designer: Angele Maublanc & Ludovic Maublanc
 Ages: 8 +
 No. of Players: 4 – 9
 Playing Time: 45 mins



This is a game for the verbally creative; everyone gets to write a rhyming quatrain poem based on the randomly drawn theme, and two ending sounds. Then scoring a bit like Boogle, with more points for uniqueness. A game like this would make me turn around and in run the other direction, but others who are more verbally inclined would probably love it.

Horus Heresy

Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
 Designer: John Goddenough & Jeff Tidball
 Ages: 13 +
 No. of Players: 2
 Playing Time: 90 mins

A scenario based battle game set in the Warhammer 40,000 universe.



Musketeers

Publisher: Gryphon Games
 Designer: Franz Josef Lammingier
 Ages: 8 +
 No. of Players: 2 - 4
 Playing Time: 15 - 45 mins

Sometimes it takes years for a game to get published in English, and this is one of them, 19 years in fact. It's a quick hand management, out-guess what card your opponents are going to play sort of game. From what I've read it looks like a fun filler, just don't expect the theme of Musketeers to add anything to the experience cause it's a paste-a-theme card game.

Republic of Rome

Publisher: Avalon Hill
 Designer: Don Greenwood, Richard Berthold & Robert Haines
 Ages: 14 +
 No. of Players: 1 – 6
 Playing Time: 300 mins

A complex political, economic game which involves cutthroat wheeling & dealing with the other players but then what else would you expect someone that involves politics. Originally published in 1990 and from what I've read on boardgamegeek it's one of the prime examples for this genre of game.

SWAT!

Publisher: Gryphon Games
 Designer: Reiner Knizia
 Ages : 7 +
 No. of Players: 2 – 7
 Playing time: 30 mins

A quickly learnt filler game, which is a push-your-luck style of game. You want to collect as many points with the cards but only have the option of swatting the deck three times... Do you hold out for more cards or does your opponent grab them instead?



ConText 2011

SF Convention in Auckland

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

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

Nova Zine Back Issues:

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

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This Month:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| BOOK | Monday 24 May
at the Presidential Palace, Papakura |
| SPACE | Friday 4 June
at Louise's place, Pakuranga |
| BOG | Saturday 19 June
at Louise's place, Pakuranga |

Next Meeting:

Wednesday June 16th, 2010
7:30pm
Auckland Horticultural Centre,
990 Great North Road,
Western Springs

Meet the new Crew!

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/>