

AGAINST THE WALL - BUT NOT GIVING UP



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Artwork by Grant Preston

Issue XVI - May 2011

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Musings from Under the Mountain

It seems that yet another American evangelist has taken it into his head to announce the End of the World—this Sunday, no less. Of course, he'll be wrong. Personally, I find these guys acutely embarrassing, and I suspect that a lot of Christians feel the same way. Don't these people actually read their Bibles? I'll hand this one to you freely, for those occasions when you need to tell the doomsayers where to get off.... *"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."* Matthew 24:36

Mind you, there are all sorts of nasty scenarios for the end of civilisation as we know it, just around the corner. The majority of humanity continues to live like there's no tomorrow, breeding like rabbits, polluting the atmosphere and the oceans, messing with the climate, and depleting the Earth's finite resources at a rate of knots. Just what will happen when we run out of oil? Or rare metals? Or food? Or fresh water?

And that doesn't include the many possibilities for natural calamities that could really make for a bad day. We know what earthquakes can do... just ask the people of Christchurch... or the Japanese. Or the hundreds of thousands who died in the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. Then there's volcanoes. Remember when Eyjafjallajökull erupted in 2010, and messed up air travel across Europe? That was a small blip on the scale of these things. The eruption of another Iceland volcano, Laki, in 1783-84, is thought to have killed six million people globally. Then there is really bad weather.... Cyclones, tornadoes, and floods... Our civilisation is so damned complex..... And so fragile.

Then there are threats from space, and I'm not talking about aliens... There's the Sun—not as stable as we like to assume. Solar flares can do more than just disrupt communications. In 1859, a solar super-storm caused induced EMF in telegraph wires, shocking telegraph operators and causing fires... Imagine what would happen if the same kind of event occurred now. Then, there's impact events. Yes, major impacts are rare—but one of them did for the dinosaurs. What if whatever hit Tunguska in 1908 had struck somewhere more populated? Like Helsinki? What if another one was coming this way? Oh, but we've seen the movie "Armageddon". We'll just send some brave guys in a space shuttle to blow it up (or more realistically, knock it off course). But what if we don't have any space shuttles any more... Oops!

Together, Keith and I watched them light the candle on Space Shuttle Endeavour for the last time on TV, late on Monday night. Was it such a great idea to give up the Space Shuttles, Mr. President? With no replacement in sight? What if the Hammer *is* coming? What are you going to do about it now.....?

Jacqui Smith

The View from the Cosy Armchair

It's cloudy and raining, but I did see a rainbow this morning on the school run. Maybe that's a good sign. I'm also sitting in a considerably more comfy armchair with a purring cat sharing my lap with the laptop. Yes, we finally got the new lounge suite, and I'm sitting in a recliner with a foot rest. Our grateful thanks to Maree and Matt who gave up their Saturday afternoon to help us with getting it from the vendor in Flat Bush back home and up the stairs...

Stayed up really late the other night to see Shuttle Endeavour lift off for the last time (it launched at five minutes to one in the morning our time). Next July is Atlantis, the very last shuttle flight and the end of an era – and there's no sign of a replacement. At least the unmanned program is going well. New Horizons is still powering its way towards Pluto, Dawn is approaching Vesta and Messenger is in orbit around Mercury. There's also some rather interesting stuff on the drawing board—like the mission to the oceans of Europa we saw on Nat Geo the other day.

We still need ideas to perk up the club membership so please get those thinking caps on, and send me your ideas, no matter how wild. Also, please get those subs in to the Treasurer. You don't have to pay cash, just ask for the bank account number, and do it electronically. It's so much easier.

See you all at the next meeting.,

Your humble
President,

Keith

(aided by a by a
big ginger ex-Tom
named George)



Contents

Issue 16—May 2011

Editorial	2
Presidential Address	2
Book Reviews	3-4
Context Preview	5
Movie Reviews: "Paul" and "Rio"	8
Uncorked	9
Sky at Night	10
Obits	11
Upcoming Events	12

**Invincible:
The Chronicles of
Nick Book 2**

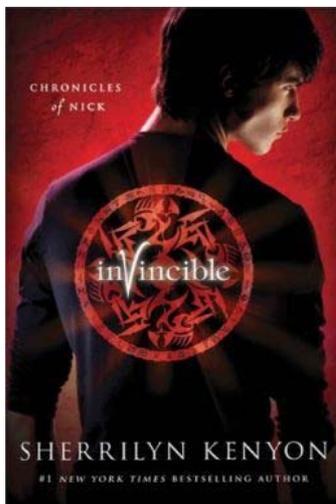
*by Sherrilyn Kenyon
Published by Atom
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jan
Butterworth*

Danger and evil have come to the bustling city of New Orleans, and Nick is in a race against time. Not only to save his own hide but those of the people at school. Again.

The story starts the day the first book ended, right after Nick and his friends defeat the zombies. The new football coach literally wants to kill him, hoards of demons are trying to collect on the newly placed bounty on his head, he's receiving magic tutoring from Death and someone is out there murdering 14-year-old boys – with Nick next on that list. He also deals with bullies, his smothering mother, and girl troubles (why is the most popular girl in school suddenly into him?).

There is a lot of character building happening, expanding established characters like Bubba and Mark and adding some new dimensions to them. New and interesting characters like Grim, Pain, and Suffering are introduced. There isn't as much action as "Infinity" as it has Nick figuring out what his powers are, how to use them and finding out secrets about himself. More of the mysteries about the series are unfolded and the motives of each of the parties fighting over Nick's future are revealed.

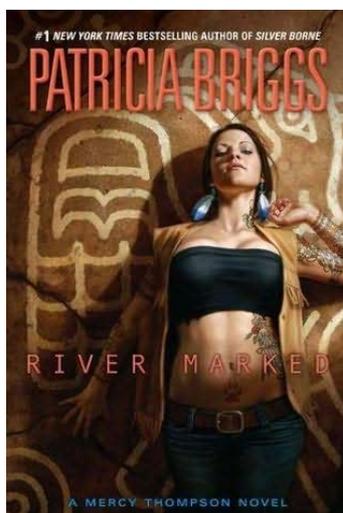
This is a great book, hilarious, fast-paced, action-packed and left you wanting more. It's a YA book and has an interesting world, wonderful characters, and interesting storylines. The ending will have you wondering what's next and how Nick's going to deal with the relentless revelations. My only complaint is there is very little of Acheron (pout) and only a brief glimpse of Savitar. You don't need to have read the Dark-Hunter series to enjoy this book (and those are definitely not YA). You do need to read INFINITY first since INVINCIBLE picks up immediately after the events from that book and Kenyon doesn't waste time rehashing what's already happened. I highly recommend this series for teenagers.



**River Marked:
Mercy Thompson
Book 6**

*by Patricia Briggs
Published by Orbit
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by Jan
Butterworth*

The first half of the book starts off slowly and focuses on relationships. Mercy discovers Stefan and his menagerie are wasting away, due to apathy. He needs a friend to shake him out of it.



After that is sorted, we have Adam and Mercy's long delayed wedding and honeymoon. Readers get appearances from just about everyone important to Mercy.

The second half was an exciting read. The fae loan Mercy and Adam a camper for a honeymoon in a campground where mysterious deaths and disappearances occur. A few days after they get there, they find an injured man in a boat. His friends, who are Native American, show up to help get him to the hospital. They know Mercy is also Native American, and she gets a mysterious visitor who knows who and what she is. They piece together what's going on - there's a giant, unkillable river monster living in the local river, devouring pretty much everyone it comes in contact with. Its minions include some fierce fey known as otterkin, and once it gets a taste of Mercy, it knows high quality when it sees it!

Mercy is needed to fulfil an ancient Indian tale of a coyote defeating the river devil, something neither she nor Adam are happy about. She also learns about her father - who and what he really was. Mercy is a great heroine – she wins through courage and cunning, with a lot of help from friends.

This book mostly centres on Mercy and Adam's honeymoon. We learn a lot about Mercy's father and her Native American side. We find out that her constantly being in the middle of trouble and change is no accident, it is part of her destiny. We see why she is able to do things that other characters around her cannot. We find out the source of her strength and abilities and why vampires hate Walkers so much.

Another exciting, fast paced and well written read from Patricia Briggs. The Mercy Thompson series keeps getting better and better. I think it's because the characters learn from the past and evolve, instead of staying the same.

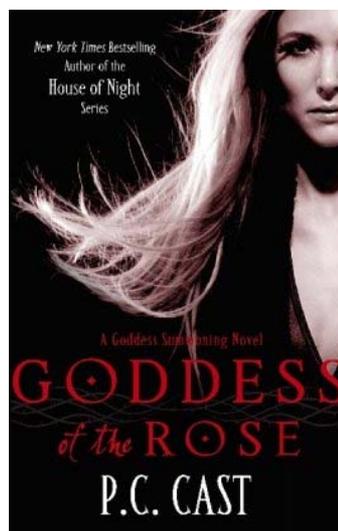
Goddess of the Rose

*by PC Cast
Published by Piatkus
Supplied by Hatchette
Reviewed by C A
Hargreaves*

The women of the Empousai family have always had a special affinity with Roses. Mikki would rather forget about the family secret to their green fingered success with the Roses – drops of their very own blood.

Then one day she accidentally conducts a ritual that sees her embracing her true destiny AND to wake up in the Realm of the Rose.

It is truly a unique view of the old Beauty and the Beast fairy tale. I enjoyed it because it showed us that no matter what our outside appearance may be it is what's inside that matter. I like that P C Cast also develops the heroine from the start of the movie where she is a little unsure of herself and by the end of the book she has become more confident in herself and her abilities.



Goddess of the Spring

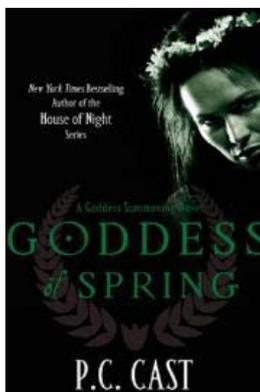
by P C Cast

Published by Piatkus

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by C A Hargreaves

Goddess of the Spring is a new take on the old Greek legend of Persephone and Hades. Lina owns a trendy bakery in Tulsa, which is in trouble. In her endeavour to save her beloved bakery she stumble across an Italian Goddess cookbook. After following one of the recipe/spells in the cookbook, she finds her and Persephone switch bodies for a 6 month period in which she can't tell anyone that she's not Persephone. I liked P C Cast's subtitle humour and the light romance that is included in this light and easy to read story. I also like how you see Lina grow in herself. How she becomes more comfortable with her body. This was a good read and easy to get into, the plot kept me interested throughout the entire book and at times I found it hard to put the book down.



This is Not a Game

by Walter Jon Williams

Published by Orbit, 460pp

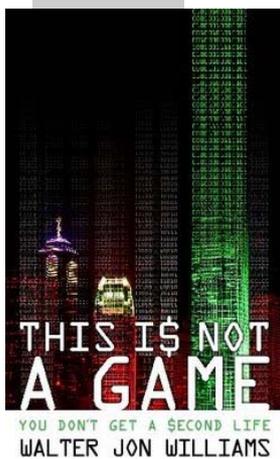
Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

This is Not a bad book – actually it's the best novel I've read in some time. It has well-developed characters, and you get to know the protagonist, geek and game-designer Dagmar, quite well. As a fellow girl-geek, I can relate to her. The book has a great plot, in fact, a great deal of plotting, and plenty of action, and it's not an easy book to put down. It's borderline in terms of being actual science fiction, set in the very near future, and being more about economics than aliens, spaceships, etc.

It begins with Dagmar stuck in a hotel room in Jakarta as Indonesia falls apart around her, a destruction brought about by a currency crisis. The first third of the book is mainly about getting Dagmar safely out of Indonesia, an escape brought about largely by the on-line community of which she is a part. Dagmar is, in fact, a "puppet master", a designer of alternate reality games, and it is the players who work together, using real world contacts, to rescue her. But Indonesia is just the start. One of Dagmar's former College gaming friends is shot and killed by a Russian assassin, and Dagmar lets the players loose on the problem of finding out why. And that's not all. Something out there is destabilising world economies. Dagmar has to find out what, and put a stop to it, before it gets her killed.

This is Not a book I'm likely to forget soon. The fragility of the world economy as portrayed here, and its vulnerability to electronic attack, is enough to give anyone nightmares. I do recommend this novel, especially to gamers and geeks, who will find it inventive and challenging, scary and fun. I must add that this new paperback edition has an absolutely brilliant cover – one of those times when you really can judge a book by its artwork....



**ConText
The Contests**

SHORT STORY

All SF, fantasy, or horror stories of up to 5,000 words in length will be eligible.

To enter, please e-mail your story, as an attachment in .rtf (Rich Text Format), to the convention e-mail address: enquiries@context.sf.org.nz.

Include a cover sheet with:

- your name
- contact details
- story title
- number of pages



Pages must be numbered. DO NOT include your name or other identifying information on the manuscript itself.

Final judging by Catherine Asaro

ARTWORK

All SF, fantasy or horror themed art - 2D, 3D, painting, sculpture, modelling or other forms - is eligible.

Please bring your artwork along to the convention, and present it in person to the registration desk to enter.



Final judging by Frank Victoria.

BOARD GAMING

Dominion – for newbies - throughout Saturday and Sunday

Dominion – for hard core gamers - Friday, Saturday, Sunday nights from 7 till midnight

Battlestar Galactica - various times throughout Saturday and Sunday

Gamers registration - \$30 - Friday, Saturday, Sunday nights from 7 till midnight only



Introducing the Inaugural Techno-Greeble Construction Challenge!

Enter as an Independent Trader (by yourself), Mind-Melders (two of you) or as a Galactic Consortium (a team of three or four).

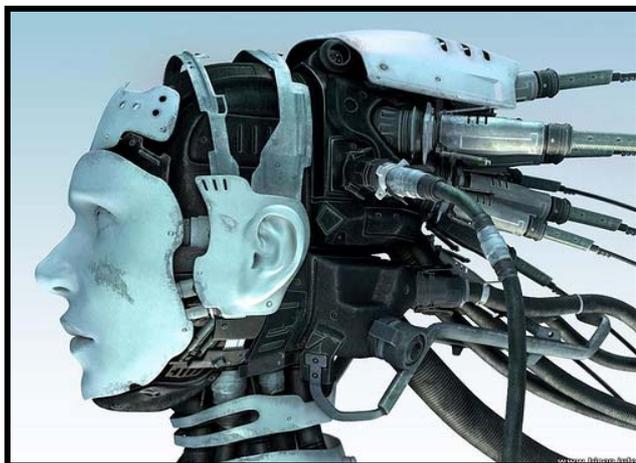
Your mission, should you decide to accept it is to scavenge for the best bits to create your techno-greeble. Your techno-greeble can be anything you want it to be (the more original and inventive, the better).

Every few hours during the convention, a random item from the parts list will be posted on the noticeboard. It will stay there until the next one is posted (but payment in the usual currency -chocolate fish – will allow you to see all the earlier ones!)

Your imagination is your best tool when it comes to sourcing the parts. If it looks good and it sounds good when you explain it, then you've found it! You've got a dice or two and a string of paperclips and you can baffle us with your pseudo-technospeak? Great: you get the idea!

During the convention, there will be some time and glue set aside to build your techno-greeble. Trading of parts is allowed (up to you to agree on the terms of trade!). Once your construction is complete, write a sales pitch and attach it to your techno-greeble.

The winner will be decided by the Imperial Overlord and The Mad Guy with the help of the other con-goers.



Random Items from the Programme:

The Business of Short Story Writing (Grant Stone)

Grant gives some writing advice - covering what editors are looking for, how to make submissions, all that sort of thing. He also talks about the specific problems people experience being so far away from the US and Europe - difficulty in getting to (many) cons, cultural differences that can make a story fall flat in other countries.

Panel is being held 12pm on Saturday.

SpecFicNZ Grand Meet-Up

A gathering of SpecFicNZ, the national association for writers of Speculative Fiction in or from New Zealand. All writers welcome. Membership not required. Meet-up is being held 5pm Saturday.

The Making of Art Books (Paul Tobin)

A discussion around the process of putting an art book together from conception through to design and marketing looking at The World of Kong, Crafting Narnia and White Cloud Worlds.

Hands-on Critique: Whipping a Short Story into Shape (Ripley Patton)

Participants will need to come with a finished short story in hand (or on laptop) to use in the various exercises. Ripley will give the first three who sign up a free short story critique via e-mail before the con.

There is a limit of 10 people for the workshop, so first in first served. Workshop is being held Sat 10-11.30am.

Workshop on musical improvisation (Wolcott)

What is improvisation in music? Donald will give a short performance that emphasizes improvisation. Then he will explain some principal concepts and techniques, and open the talk up for questions.

The Idea: Word & the Image (Asaro, Lowe, Victoria)

A discussion between authors and artists on the creative relationship between writer and artist in speculative fiction, how the idea of the story is given effect through world and image.

Writing from Both Sides of the Brain (Asaro)

Writers who write both non-fiction and fiction describe how the two disciplines interact and interfere with each other. How do you carve time for writing fiction from a schedule filled with non-fiction projects? Why do authors float between reality and fantasy, and what are the challenges between the two?

Faster Than Light Travel: Will the myth ever become the next marvel? (Asaro)

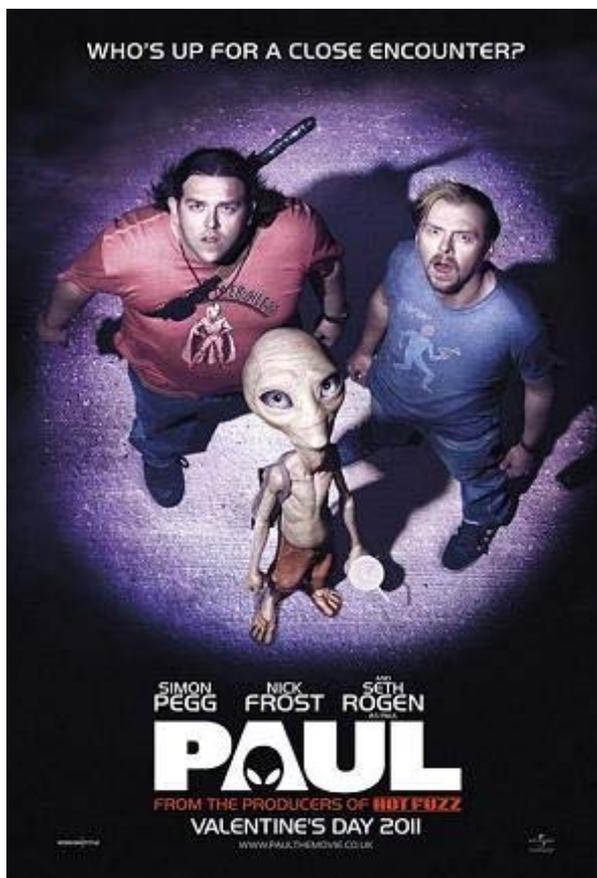
Science fiction writers have long used ideas of faster than light travel in their stories even though science as we know it predicts that it is impossible to travel at the speed of light. Come hear scientists talk about current ideas in physics and how we might extrapolate them to exotic space drives or other scenarios for fictional space travel.

Arms & SF&F (Lowe, Robins, Asaro)

From epic fantasy to space opera, both weapons and armour, as well as battles and military tactics play an important part in SFF. So how important is it to get the details of the technologies and the tactics right? Is rough enough good enough or is diving into the detail an essential element of some genres?

Science in Science Fiction: TV & Movies (Asaro, Kirkpatrick, Lowe)

Ever wonder how accurate your favourite sf show is when it comes to science? Would a Stargate really work? How about tribbles? Come listen to a panel of experts talk about how science and fiction intersect in our favourite shows, either movies or TV...



Directed by Greg Mottola
 Produced by Nira Park, Tim Bevan, Eric Fellner
 Written by Simon Pegg, Nick Frost
 Starring Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Seth Rogen

Reviewed by Nicolette Lewer

“Paul” is an enjoyable movie aimed at sci-fi geeks, starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost – the duo who starred in an action comedy (Hot Fuzz) and possibly the first zom-rom-com (Shaun of the Dead).

Simon and Nick portray two sci-fi fans from the UK who finally get to make their dream trip to America - so they can go to Comic-Con and then visit all of the UFO sites. Now that’s an itinerary! However, out on the road the duo find themselves picking up Paul, a wise-cracking alien who is trying to find a way off-planet before some FBI agents (a menacing Jason Bateman being one of them) catch up with him, as well as a Christian woman from a campervan park.

Not surprisingly, ‘Paul’ pays homage to most of the sci-fi movies out there, from Star Wars to Close Encounters. There’s a cameo from a famous director and revealing who is actually in charge of the chase after the alien would spoil the fun.

My only caution is that the film might be a bit offensive to those who are religious – once the Christian campervan woman is ‘cured’ of her belief that Paul is a demon and the duo are possessed because they believe in evolution, the atheist viewpoint is trotted out.

All in all, a good film for a laugh – not as good as Galaxy Quest, but better than Spaceballs.

Review
 by Jacqui
 Smith

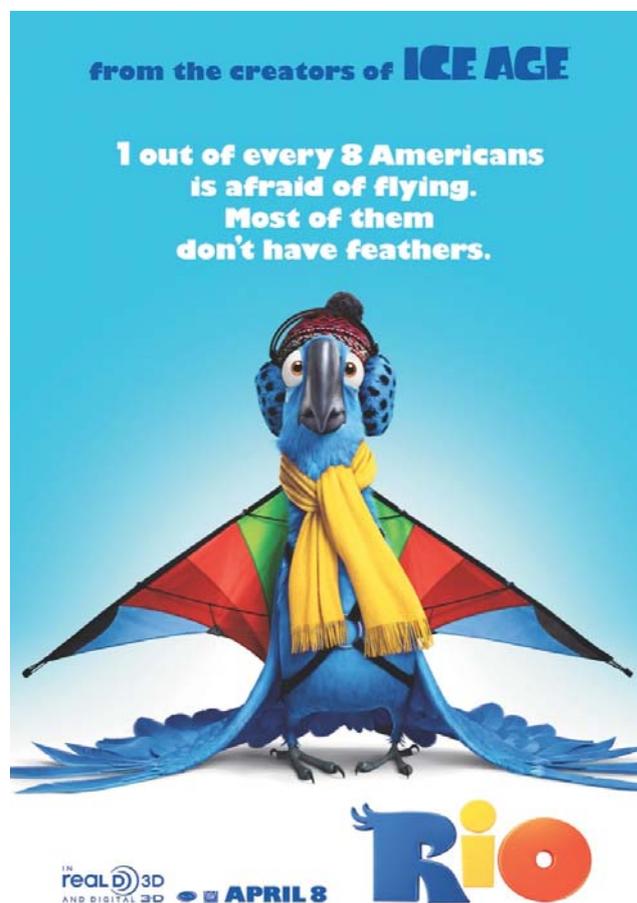


Directed by Carlos Saldanha
 Produced by John C. Donkin, Bruce Anderson, Chris Wedge
 Screenplay by Don Rhymer, Joshua Sternin, Jeffrey Ventimilia, Todd R. Jones, Earl Richey Jones
 Story by Carlos Saldanha
 Starring Jesse Eisenberg, Anne Hathaway, George Lopez

Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

For our second school holiday movie, we went to “Rio”... but we didn’t fly. Our bright blue psittacine hero, Blu, isn’t keen on the idea of flying either. He’s the last male of his kind (which is apparently based on the Spix’s Macaw—a species which is highly endangered in real life, with only 73 pairs remaining, all in captivity, and it is blue, though not as decidedly blue as Blu). He’s been bird-napped, taken to the US, and has been leading the quiet life with a book-seller in Minnesota. And he’s never learned to fly.

An ornithologist from Brazil has tracked down the bird, and offers to take them both to Rio, where he has a female, named Jewel. Jewel is very different to Blu, an independent bird with attitude, and a firm determination to escape the confines of the bird sanctuary. And of course, she most certainly can fly—and can’t understand why Blu can’t...



Needless to say the birds don't exactly hit it off to begin with, and then the sanctuary is raided by smugglers. The birds manage to escape, but are chained together. Which makes things difficult, especially for birds that have rather different agendas, and leads to a meeting with a bulldog named Luiz, and a circular saw. And everyone ends up at the carnival... although that isn't quite the end as the smugglers manage to recover the birds—after managing to make themselves look really silly. They get the birds onto a plane, and well, you can guess what happens next.

“Rio” is a big, colourful, party of a movie, with lots of humour and slapstick. It's light-hearted and entirely predictable, but it's fun, and I know that I came out of the theatre with a big smile on my face. There's a lot to be said for making people happy, and this movie does just that (as long as you're not too picky).

The music was pretty good too. I'm quite keen on getting hold of the soundtrack— something I haven't considered for any movie for a long time. It would nice to think that the creators of “Rio” might donate some of their profits to the conservation of the Spix's Macaw, but I can't find any evidence for that anywhere.

Uncorked by Broderick Wells

Okay, it's May, which means the inevitable “May the Fourth be with you” jokes have been made. To which the only reply is “*Felicitas Cinco de Mayo!*”¹ (Not that I would plead the Fifth: I'm proud of my mistakes and they've made me what I am.) However, absent for the past few years have been the Mayday parades on Red Square, where the Red Army showed off its hardware, and the Western armies put together a shopping wish list. Ah, them's the days. And then there were the traditional Mayday celebrations, like virginal young ladies dancing around a maypole and decking its phallic symbolism with ribbons - penis worship for sure. Ah, them's definitely the days. [Yes, and Keith and I should have told Broderick that May 1 is our Wedding Anniversary – Ed].

Not to be outdone as a focal point of European celebration is VE Day – which is celebrated on 8th May in Western Europe, and 9th May in Eastern Europe. Something to do with time zones and hour of ratification, so I'm told. Of course, the second Sunday is Mother's Day in New Zealand and several other countries. And 25th is Towel Day, in honour of Douglas Adams (I'm a hoopy frood; I know where my towel is – do you?).

Of course, the month of May is New Zealand Music Month, which means I get to hear all manner of songs I wish would get played more often, and several songs I consider to played way too much, even if it is only the once. But most important of all, May is Zombie Awareness Month. I kid you not. The Zombie Research Society has decreed it thus, and you can show your support of their activity by wearing a grey ribbon during May. To which all that needs to be said is “*Brains.*”

¹ The 4th is always followed by the 5th.

May Day...

Is it about dancing around festive poles...



Parading military might....



Rescue at sea....



Or simply a great day for a Wedding...

(at least one that's easy to remember).



The Sky at Night – June 2011

The pair of Saturn and Spica dominates the night sky in the evening and this is a good time of the year to look for galaxies with binoculars and telescopes in the region of Virgo and Libra (assuming you can see the sky and it's not cloudy).

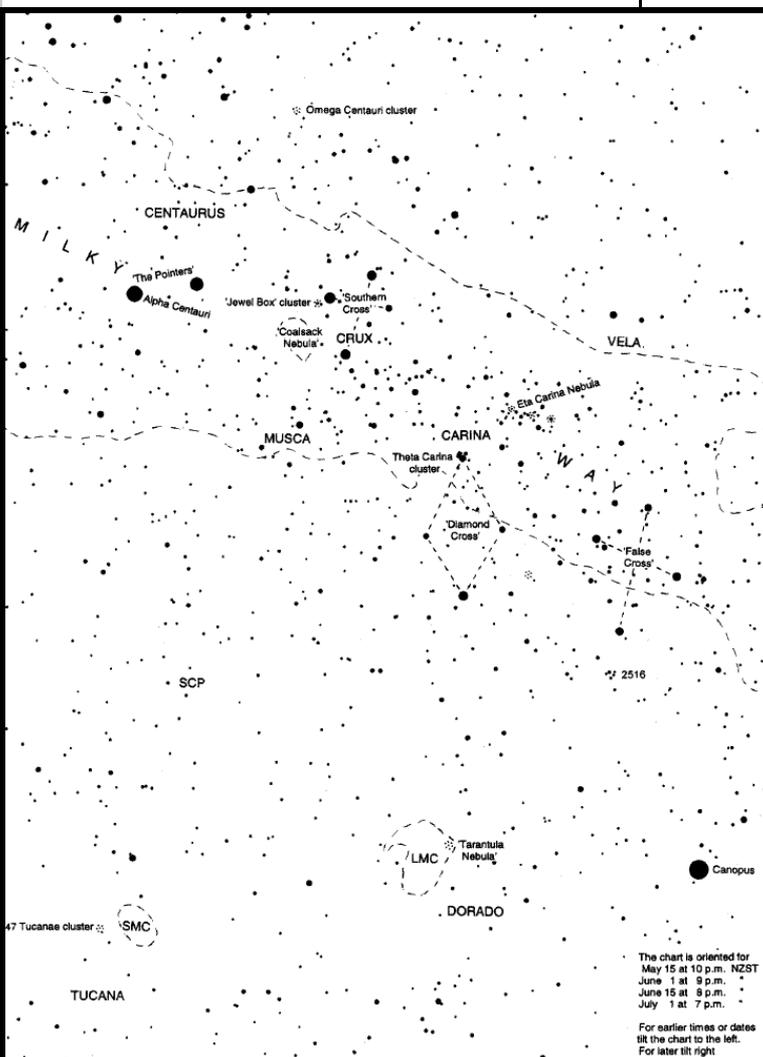
One good object is M104 (NGC4594) otherwise known as the Sombrero Galaxy. When you see it in a telescope, it is easy to see how it got it's name. We are looking at it edge on and it is located halfway between Corvus and Virgo.

Arcturus, in Bootes, is getting close to it's highest point, and if your northern horizon is low and dark enough, it is even possible to see one of the stars in the Big Dipper (eta Ursa Major) as it briefly peeks above the horizon. I saw it from Taranaki once so it should be possible from Auckland given the right conditions.

Another interesting binocular object in the area is M53 (NGC 5024), a globular cluster in Coma Berenices.



Moving up towards the zenith, the familiar diamond shape of Corvus is high in the sky and crossing to the south, the Southern Cross also reaching it's highest point. This means that objects such as Omega Centauri (NGC5139), the Jewel Box (NGC4755) and the Coal Sack are in a prime position for observation and photographing. Another two objects that may be possible are Centaurus A (NGC 5128) which is an elliptical galaxy as well as a strong radio source and the Blue Planetary (NGC 3918) which is a planetary nebula. More about those, another month.



Rising in the east is the familiar shape of Scorpius (or Scorpio). It really does look like a scorpion. The Polynesians knew this constellation as the 'Fish Hook of Maui'. More about Scorpius in a future month's column.

Saturn, as already mentioned, is the only planet visible in the evening sky. It's largest moon, Titan can be easily seen in a small telescope but larger telescopes can see more moons. I have seen Rhea, Tethys, and Dione through the Zeiss at Stardome. The other planets are either in the dawn sky or are too close to the sun to be seen.

Events:

- 9th June– First Quarter Moon
- 16th June– Full Moon
- 23rd June– Last Quarter Moon

We actually see the start of a total lunar eclipse on the morning of the 16th, with the moon entering the umbra at 6:23am. It will be fully eclipsed by 7:22am.

More information can be found at:

- <http://www.astronomy.co.nz/pub/home.asp>
- <http://www.astronomy.org.nz/>
- <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/index.html>

The chart is oriented for May 15 at 10 p.m. NZST
 June 1 at 9 p.m.
 June 15 at 9 p.m.
 July 1 at 7 p.m.
 For earlier times or dates tilt the chart to the left.
 For later tilt right.

Obits

April 17

Osamu Dezaki, (aged 67)

Japanese anime director, best known in the English-speaking world for “Space Adventure Cobra”, and “Tomorrow's Joe”.



Kenneth Cumberland, (aged 97)

British-born New Zealand geography professor, and presenter of the “Landmarks” TV series.

April 18

Pietro Ferrero Jr., (aged 47)

Italian businessman, joint chief executive of the family-owned Ferrero group who make Ferrero Rocher and Kinder Surprise, and Nutella spread.



April 20

Madelyn Pugh, (aged 90)

American screenwriter who helped create the Lucy character for the “I Love Lucy” series, and wrote many of the episodes of that series and its sequels (and although I have to admit I personally found Lucy irritating beyond belief, somebody must have liked them because they were nominated for three Emmy Awards).



April 24

Sathya Sai Baba, 84,

Indian spiritual guru, founder of the Sathya Sai Organization.

April 27

David Wilkerson, (aged 79)

American Christian evangelist and author, famous for “The Cross and the Switchblade”.



Yvette Vickers, (aged 81–82)

American actress who appeared as Honey Parker in “Attack of the 50 Foot Woman”. Later she became a model, and a Playboy playmate). Her mummified body was found in her home on this date—she died alone and forgotten, her actual date of death may never be known.

April 28

William Campbell, (aged 87)

American film and television actor, best known to fans as Trelane, the Squire of Gothos, and as the Klingon Captain Koloth in Star Trek.



April 29

Joanna Russ, (aged 74)

American science fiction author and feminist, author of “The Female Man”. She won a 1972 Nebula Award for her short story “When It Changed” and a 1983 Hugo Award for her novella “Souls”.

May 1

J. Ernest Wilkins, Jr., (aged 87)

African-American mathematician and nuclear scientist, worked on the Manhattan Project.

May 2

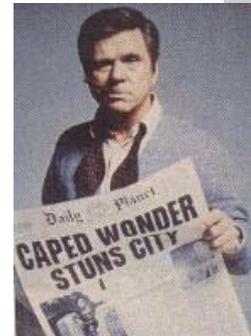
Osama bin Laden, (aged 54)

Saudi founder of Al-Qaeda, said to have planned the September 11, 2011 terrorist attacks... “Ding Dong, the bad guy’s dead”....

May 3

Jackie Cooper, (aged 88)

American actor, who started out as a child, becoming the youngest person ever to earn a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actor, at the age of 9 for “Skippy”, a record which still stands. He successfully made the transition to adult acting—fans know him as Daily Planet editor Perry White in the “Superman” film series starring Christopher Reeve—and to directing, earning him Emmy awards for his work as director on episodes of “M*A*S*H” and “The White Shadow”.



May 5

Claud Choules, (aged 110)

British-born Australian veteran, the last combat veteran of World War I. End of an era...

May 7

Willard Boyle, (aged 86)

Canadian physicist, and co-inventor of the charge-coupled device, for which he shared the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physics. He also co-invented the first continuously operating ruby laser in 1962, and from 1962-64 was director of Space Science and Exploratory Studies at the Bell Labs subsidiary Bellcomm, providing support for the Apollo space program.

May 16

Edward Hardwicke, (aged 78),

British actor who played Dr. Watson in the Granada Television adaptations of the Sherlock Holmes stories in “The Return of Sherlock Holmes”.



compiled
by
Jacqui
Smith

ConText 2011

New Zealand National SF Convention

ConText will be held over Queen's Birthday weekend in Auckland, Friday 3rd to Monday 6th June. The venue has been changed to the Quality Hotel Barrycourt, 10-20 Gladstone Road, Parnell.

Catherine Asaro, an American author of both science fiction and fantasy novels, will be the GoH. The fan GoH will be Lynelle Howell, editor of Phoenixine and an active Wellington fan. Also attending will be Helen Lowe, the Christchurch based author of the Heir series, of which the first, 'The Wall of Night' was released earlier this month. The crew are also in negotiations with other potential guests.

This is a marvellous opportunity for anyone who enjoys science fiction to participate in 4 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.

The Barrycourt Hotel is holding a block of rooms for convention attendees. Book directly and quote the reference number 64913 to ensure you receive the rates.

Phone: +64 9 303 3789
Facsimile: +64 9 377 3309
<http://www.barrycourt.co.nz/reservations@barrycourt.co.nz>

Standard King Room

King bed, ensuite bathroom, coffee & tea facilities. LCD TV, DVD, writing desk. Some rooms with amazing city & harbour views. Rate includes car parking & daily newspaper (on request). \$109.00 per night including GST (maximum 2 pax)

Double Room

1 Queen & 1 Single bed, ensuite bathroom, coffee & tea facilities, private balcony, LCD TV, DVD, writing desk. Some rooms with amazing city & harbour views. Rate includes car parking & daily newspaper (on request). \$129.00 per night including GST (maximum 2 pax)

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:

BOG None this month due to Convention

BOOK 23rd May at Marie Williams.

SPACE At Context.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 15 June, 2011 at 7:30pm
Auckland Horticultural Centre,
990 Great North Road, Western Springs



Upcoming Events:

June 3-6th 2011 **ConText**
2011 New Zealand NatCon in Auckland
http://context.sf.org.nz/wiki/index.php/Main_Page