



Issue XXI - October 2011

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Musings from Under the Mountain

READ SCIENCE FICTION IN PUBLIC!

I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that one of the easiest ways to locate our fellow SF&F aficionados is simply to openly read good SF in public.

Here's the story... there I was, sitting on the bench by the side of the pool, drying off, and reading Gail Carriger's "Changeless". To my surprise, a young lady addressed me from the pool asking what I was reading, adding that the cover looked interesting. Of course, I told her what the book was called. That it was the second of a series. That the first was called "Soulless", and that she could read my review of it on the internet in Novazine which could be found off the sf.org.nz website. (Which it can, you just need to find Stella Nova first). We continued to chat about other authors, conventions and so on.

Whether or not she follows up on the information I gave her is entirely up to her—who knows, she might be reading this column. Or not, as the case may be. But it wasn't at all difficult. I just chose to read instead of sitting there doing nothing. And being me, what I prefer to read is SF&F. It never ceases to amaze me how many people go totally unprepared into a situation where they know they're going to be sitting around waiting for an indeterminate period. Come on, guys, take a BOOK! Reading has to be more interesting than staring at the spots of dirt on the wall. And certainly more beneficial than brooding...

It's not as if good books are hard to find these days. The city library is free... and abounding with new SF&F. No less than 194 titles this month—and that doesn't include graphic novels. If you don't believe me look here: <http://www.aucklandlibraries.govt.nz/EN/New/Pages/NewBooks.aspx> They're not all good, of course, though what constitutes a good book is at less partly a matter of opinion. They're not even all new, there are re-prints and compilations. But I was able to find a handful of titles to please me, and I'm fussy these days. Life's too short now to read bad books. It always was, really.

Though I have read, even purchased, books in the past, that I'd now consider bad. Back in the 70's, when I was a teenager, very little fantasy was being published. Thus, I own a complete set of "The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant" which I now think is truly awful, painful, and suffering from one of the most narcissistic, self-absorbed and annoying protagonists ever conceived. But then it was the only new fantasy around, so I read it, and collected it. Thanks be, the fantasy genre has come a long way since those sad times, spawning a bunch of sub-genres (some of which the world could probably have done without), and even now quite capable of surprising me with original new worlds of the imagination. As for SF, that's another story... but now I've run out of space, so that will have to wait for next month.

Jacqui Smith

The View from the President's Chair

I see rain ... again. Still, everything in the garden is growing, including the weeds. The trouble in dealing with those is that it's basically been too wet to do anything about them and when the soil is wet it gets sticky like clay. Hopefully it'll dry out soon. One thing I'm not seeing though is flags. Everywhere else I've looked, there are flags fluttering, on houses, trees, fences and even on cars. Some of those car flags have been ridiculously large and I wonder if they could cause a navigational hazard. Like the one that was fluttering in front of the windscreen. Then there are the cars that are festooned with many little ones. I believe the record was something like 462. What is all that extra surface area is doing to fuel consumption? It's all due to a madness that has been sweeping the country lately. Yes .. I mean the Rugby World Cup. If we could harness all the energy it could probably power the country for ages. And if we could get that much enthusiasm for other things, we could be on Mars and the Moon by now. Or even hosting an SF Worldcon. It all reminds me of the Roman Gladiatorial Games, put on to pacify the citizens. What really irks is that this RWC has been creeping into all aspects of society. No matter where you go, you can't seem to escape it – well maybe heading off into the bush without any communication with the outside world might do it. Adverts on TV, billboards, the Internet, etc. The top stories on the news always seem to be about rugby, and so are the newspaper headlines. Nearly everyone tries to incorporate the RWC into their messages. It's even in the schools. I was rather concerned when my son told me that his science lessons were based around rugby. Maybe that was someone's idea to try and get students interested, but it could also put a lot of people off. Is it all worth it? I really don't know. Sometimes I wonder if rugby in this country isn't a sport any more, but a religion. It's a pity that we can't put the same effort into more important things. Anyway, that's my rant for the month. See you all at the next meeting.

Keith Smith
President – Stella Nova

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Dragon's Oath

by PC & Kristin Cast

Published by Atom

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

This is a story of Dragon – how he got the name and ended up as fencing instructor at the House of Night. It's the first in a new mini-series of novellas about the House of Night. The story explains the background of Dragon and Anastasia, their love affair, his oath to her, and his torment after her death in Awakenings. It's fun to see these two when they were young, and get a bit more insight into Dragon's personality. It makes his character more real and helps to better understand his actions at the end of "Awakened". Banished from his noble English family, Bryan Lankford is Marked on the docks and becomes a Fledgling. He travels to America, finding that he has a talent for the sword along the way. Bryan becomes Dragon Lankford, a Sword Master, teaching at the House of Night. There he meets Anastasia, a Professor of Spells and History. Becoming a Fledgling proves to be exciting, but it opens a door to a dangerous world.... Dragon is caught up in a dark power and uses his fighting skills and brains to ward off the evil, all the while protecting Anastasia. Dragon's Oath is a quick, sweet read, suitable for teens like the rest in the House of Night series. My favourite of the series, but you need to read "Awakened" first.



Savage Nature:

Leopard People Book 5

by Christine Feehan

Published by Piatkus

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

The fifth book in the Leopard series starts out slow, but the action increases as the story continues. Saria Boudreaux grew up wild, with an alcoholic father and five older brothers. She escapes into the swamp to photograph the world around her. She finds several corpses with animal bites and calls the landowner. This may seem illogical but her brothers are leopard people and she wants this kept unofficial Drake Donovan is sent to investigate the killings. Drake figures out Saria is his mate at first sight (sniff) and sets about making it so. Drake is puzzled when the leopard-shifting families close ranks on his investigation, in an effort to protect her. Then Saria catches the eye of the serial killer, and the hunt is on to find and stop him.

Saria is a strong character who doesn't need saving. Apart from the whole serial killer thing. Drake is very Alpha male without being a macho man. He's a fun character to read about. The suspense builds throughout and you don't find out who the killer is until the end. This is a good, exciting story, rather steamy in parts so suitable for mature teens and up. I'm looking forward to the next book in this series. This is an interesting world.



Full Moon Rising:

Riley Jenson Book 1

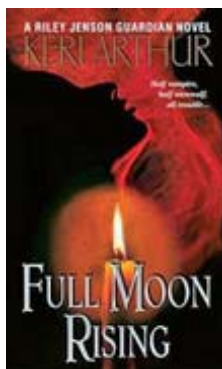
by Keri Arthur

Published by Piatkus

Supplied by Hatchette

Reviewed by Jan Butterworth

Riley Jenson and her twin Rhoan work for Melbourne's Directorate for Other Races, an organisation that polices the supernatural and keeps humans safe from the ones that are evil. They have special powers, as werewolf/vampire hybrids. They only admit to being werewolves, keeping their nature secret, as werewolves look down at vampires and they would be treated as freaks. Rhoan is a guardian, while Riley, wanting to keep a lower profile, is an operative. Her boss, Jack, wants to bring her into the ranks of the guardians, and sends her on a special assignment when Rhoan goes missing. Helping her search is Quinn, a very old vampire who once had his heart broken by a werewolf lover. This means he will never fully trust another werewolf, though he is happy to help Riley through the lust that engulfs werewolves in the days leading up to the full moon. Werewolves must have sex then or they will suffer moon madness, where they are not in control of their senses and can commit damage without being aware of it. They discover Rhoan's disappearance is connected to a mysterious company that is kidnapping the supernatural community and collecting sperm and eggs from them. These are then used in an illegal project to create a perfect soldier. The company is also involved in the disappearance of several guardians who are part of the Directorate. Riley learns one of her lovers may be involved in the conspiracy.



Quiz:

Those Imaginary Materials

1. One of the earliest imaginary materials was Cavourite. In which classic novel did *Cavourite* first appear?
2. What is the most common colour of *kryptonite*?
3. Who invented *Flubber*?
4. What material was used to put Hans Solo into stasis in "Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back"?
5. In Blake's 7, what was made of *Herculaneum*?
6. What is made of a milky-gray translucent, nearly frictionless material called *Scrith*?
7. *Quantium 40* is of the most valuable materials known to the Babylon 5 universe. It is essential in building what?
8. Which magical metal is used to build the gates of the Unseen University?
9. In Stargate, one remarkable material is used as an energy source, a weapon, and for building Stargates. What is it?
10. In the animated movie "Robots", which character claims to be made of *Afraidium*?



by Jacqui Smith

Shadow's Son

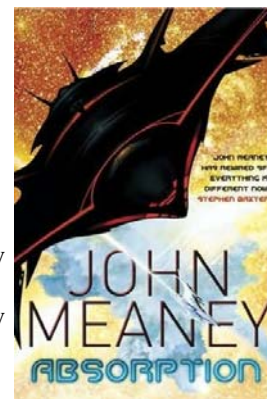
by Jon Sprunk
 Published by Gollancz
 Supplied by Hatchette
 Reviewed by Stephen Litten
 Shadow's Son is a bit of a parson's egg. Caim is an assassin sent to kill a seemingly minor noble, only to find the man dead before the deed is done. He is disturbed in his investigations of the corpse by his putative victim's daughter, Josey. But having a code, he doesn't kill her. They are both interrupted by the local equivalent of the law, who have descended on the house with the intention of killing both Caim and Josey. Caim, drawing on a power he is not entirely comfortable using affects their escape and renders several of the attackers *hors de combat*. It takes several close encounters with the "law" for Josey to realise she is as much a target as Caim and cleave to him out of necessity. I want to scream that this could have been better, for there are several clichés in the story: an assassin with a code, the tarl with a heart, sole surviving heir to the throne. Mercifully they are not over-egged with other clichés, but still: they are clichés. Caim has a power that he barely understands, and it frightens him when he does use it. Unfortunately, this could have been explored better and more fully, but at least it does not become a wonder weapon. There is also the waste of Caim's invisible friend, Kit. Whether she is truly real, or merely a manifestation of Caim's power is not fully resolved. But only Caim can see and hear her, and she does feed him useful information. And like most female companions, she displays a fit of pique when Caim shows more concern over his latest acquaintance than her. What do help overcome the clichés are the two primary villains. One is a Machiavellian prelate, intent on establishing a theocracy with himself as chief theocrat. The other is a dark sorcerer, the private assassin of the prelate. While the latter is drawn more sketchily than the former, they add a level of interest to the story and help transform it. Naturally the story rolls to a climax with a showdown between the dark sorcerer and Caim. Mercifully, Sprunk manages to stave off the seemingly inevitable "boy meets girl, boy gets girl despite the circumstances" ending. I wait to see if Sprunk's storytelling has improved in the sequel, *Shadow's Lure*.



a modern fairy tale, with a prince who has no idea of his heritage, on a quest to find his baby sister and defeat the evil Lady Gall (whose ambition is to be Queen). All aboard the wonderful Travelling Restaurant, where if nothing else, the food is guaranteed to make the reader salivate. Many things here are more than they seem, and the floating diner called the Travelling Restaurant is certainly one of them. I'd be happy to give this to any able reader in the 8 to 12 age bracket, and younger children may well appreciate it being read to them. Don't be surprised if requests for "special plates for babies" result....

Absorption

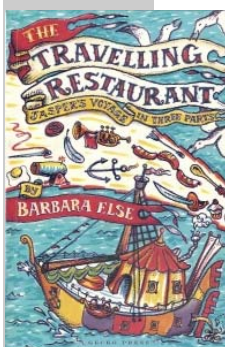
by John Meaney
 Published by Gollancz, pp407
 Supplied by Hatchette
 Reviewed by Jacqui Smith
 When I was a kid, scouring the local libraries for science fiction, I learned to seek out the right yellow dust jackets that signified quality SF published by Gollancz – I knew I'd get a good read, even if I'd never heard of the author. Well, the bright yellow jackets have gone, but Gollancz is still here as a mark of quality SF, and this is a fine example.



For starters, this is proper science fiction, with spaceships, strange futures, and elements of time travel, as we swing backwards and forwards from Viking pre-history, through 1930's Europe, to distant Fulgor in the 27th century. As a rule, I dislike constant switching between characters in divers times and places, but Meaney makes it work, mainly through the subtle links between the characters. (What is continuing to bug me are fragments of this novel which I swear I've read before – in particular, chapter nine where Carl Blackstone remembers becoming a Pilot. If someone could figure out just where that was previously published, I'd be grateful.) Nonetheless this is clever, clever stuff, and very well written. Meaney succeeds in making high weirdness make sense, a true gift in an SF writer. This is volume one of a trilogy, so it's far from the end of the story, and it does end on a major defeat for the good guys – let's make it quite clear that if you're going to be a hero in Meaney's world, the consequences may well be fatal. Gotta say that I'm keen to see what happens next...

The Travelling Restaurant: Jasper's Voyage in Three Parts

by Barbara Else
 Published by Gecko Press, pp295
 Supplied by Gecko Press
 Reviewed by Jacqui Smith
 I know that I am far from the only adult with a secret love of children's literature – not the preachy politically correct kind that some adults persist in writing because they think children ought to like it – no, I'm talking about the kind of foray into the far realms of the imagination that intelligent children actually love. I suspect it appeals to the child in us. This is one of those books. It's essentially

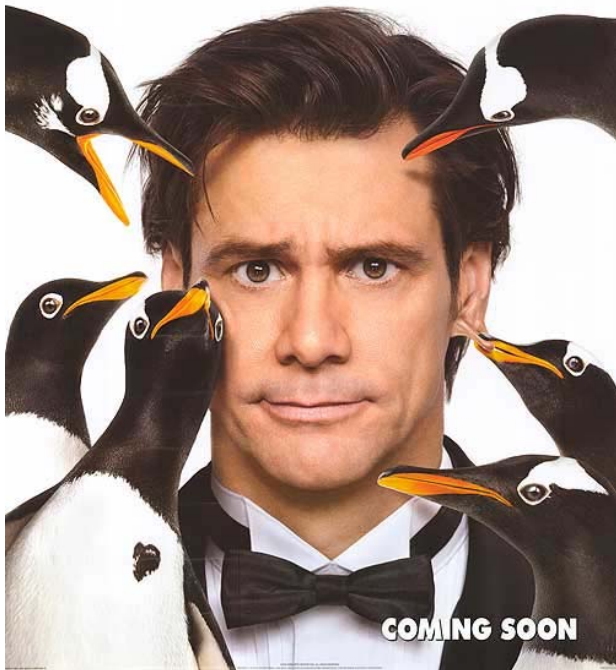


Quiz Answers

1. The First Men in the Moon
2. Green
3. Professor Brainard.
4. Carbonite.
5. The hull of the Liberator.
6. The Ringworld.
7. Jumpgates.
8. Octiron.
9. Naqahdah.
10. Fender.

You can find the periodic table of fictional materials shown at this month's meeting here:
<http://www.fictionalmaterials.com/>

JIM CARREY
**MR. POPPER'S
 PENGUINS**



Directed by Mark Waters
 Produced by John Davis
 Screenplay by Sean Anders
 Starring Jim Carrey
 Based on the book by Richard and Florence Atwater
 Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

We'd looked at the movies on offer for this school holidays and were not impressed. I mean, "The Smurfs"? Are they serious? As for "Spy Kids 4D", young sir might have been interested, but there was no way that I was going to sit through a movie with reviews that rotten. So we compromised on "Mr. Popper's Penguins", which was nearing the end of its run. This proved something of a bonus since it led us to the Hoyts cinemas at Sylvia Park, where small numbers placed us in one of their "Director's Lounge" theatres. Comfy armchairs! Only 32 of them, and yet a nice-sized screen. This made for one of my more pleasant school holiday viewing experiences. And pleasant is a pretty good word to describe "Mr. Popper's Penguins", along with predictable and perhaps a little pedestrian... but I laughed out loud several times, most often in the scene with the penguins in the Guggenheim. The penguins are the stars of this movie, and even Jim Carrey at his most manic is hard put to prevent them stealing the show. It's genuinely hard to tell where live action and CGI begin and end with these critters. Very well done.

The plot is a simple one. Neglected son grows up to become business-obsessed neglectful father; inherits a passel of penguins whom proceed to win his affections, and change his life and that of his family, for the better. The villains of the piece are the businessmen who are pushing Potter on and the zookeeper who is determined to acquire those penguins. The setting is New York—it has to be... Oh, and you have admire Ophelia Lovibond playing Popper's personal paper pusher....

Directed by Shawn Levy
 Screenplay by John Gatins
 Story by Dan Gilroy & Jeremy Leven
 Based on "Steel" by Richard Matheson
 Starring Hugh Jackman, Dakota Goyo
 Reviewed by Jacqui Smith

"Real Steel" was not on my initial list of school holiday movie options, for two reasons; firstly it had an "M" certificate, and secondly it was about boxing, a sport I happen to consider barbaric. However, when I checked it out, it had much better reviews than the other offerings, and according to the parental advisory on IMDB it was more a PGV with most of the violence being robot-bashing. What intrigued me most was learning that the movie was based on a real SF short story, "Steel" by Richard Matheson which had previously been made into a "Twilight Zone" episode - and unusually the author actually likes this latest adaptation, saying "Shawn Levy did a wonderful job".

I have to say that I rather liked it too. Hugh Jackman's character is a total ass, but his son seems to have acquired brains and common sense from his late mother. The eleven-year-old kid is very much the hero of this movie, which makes it especially suited for boys of that age ("M" certificate not making sense there). It is proper science fiction in the sense that it's easy to imagine this happening in the not-to-distant future. The evolution of today's robot warriors into humanoid boxing robots is quite conceivable—along with the abolition of human boxing. It certainly makes for noisy and powerful action sequences... though frankly I wouldn't want to stand anywhere near one of those massive fighting machines—especially when they start to crash from the punishment. The movie is well-executed (apparently they pulled in Sugar Ray Leonard to choreograph the fight sequences) and the mixture of animatronics and motion capture CGI used for the robots works brilliantly. The kid gave the movie 4.5 stars out of 5... I'd go more for 4 out of 5 for Hugh Jackman being irritating, and I'd definitely recommend it for entertaining bored older boys.



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by
 Jacqui
 Smith

An Evening at WOWA

As a science fiction and fantasy fan I am at the low end of the creative spectrum – by this I mean I do little in the way of creative work (such as crafting a costume or building a technological marvel) as the transition from inspired design to realised concept is apt to include much in the way of constructional errors – preferring to enjoy and appreciate the creative talents of others. If questioned I describe myself as the artist’s second most desired of objects: the audience.

However, not being inclined to demonstrate creative ability does not mean a lack of interest in such endeavours; quite the opposite in fact. My lunchtime visits to one art gallery (it being about five minutes walk from my office) have been frequent enough that I am now on a first name basis with the owner. Mercifully, the price tags normally found on artworks that pique my interest also frighten my banker so the acquisitive edge of these perambulatory visits remains quite blunt (mind you if I had a wallspace that could adequately display 2 metre by 3 metre paintings there is one artist I would be collecting – along with a substantial bank overdraft). So it was with much joy in 2005 that I learnt that the World of Wearable Arts (WOWA) was transferring from Nelson to Wellington. Back before that news was fresh a close friend of mine had had the good fortune to be taken to a showing in what became the final Nelson season. He came back raving about that show: the quality of the costumes (the wearable art), the in-show entertainment, and the atmosphere of the show itself. He also took the opportunity to visit the joint World of Wearable Art and

vintage car museum, a sort of his and hers destination, which is located in Nelson too. With its shift to Wellington access to the show became so much easier, the requirement for travel and accommodation removed (a planning inconvenience that can escalate into a traveller’s nightmare), and tickets were duly acquired. Previous experience of WOWA was via the medium of television, which in years past used to be a broadcast of the show. (With the show’s move to Wellington these broadcasts have shifted focus and are more about the artists and less about the art.) So, while I knew what to expect by way of the WOWA show I was not

prepared for the visual sumptuousness of the live event nor for the dramatic performances of the dancers during



and between show segments. Television focuses and concentrates on visually strong images and in doing so may miss the thematic whole of a presentation; being part of a live audience allows the viewer to see to the show as the stage manager designed it, with the visual misdirection, performance surprises and all.

After two or three years of attending an evening show and eating a meal beforehand the decision was made to attend the Sunday matinee (which starts in the very late afternoon) and take advantage of the substantial food parcel included as part of the star package (seats with a fantastic view and price to match) tickets. This reduced the stress of getting a park, eating a pre-show meal within a constrained time along with several thousand others, and then watching the show as dinner is digested to the logistically much easier getting a park. With the amount of food included in the star package hamper an after match meal is purely optional.

WOWA is not only an art show it is also in many regards a fashion show, which given the nature of the event suggests those attending should have the best of their glad rags on. However, male members of the audience need to take care as to how they dress for the event too. This is not because the men need to match the women in their sartorial elegance but because there is the danger of being too well dressed and being mistaken for part of the pre-show entertainment – as a friend discovered to his surprise one year – when the comedic entertainment wears black tie and dinner suit.

Having now attended WOWA at least six times I can state that each show is different to the year before, but there are similarities. The art is presented in defined sections, which have been decided almost as soon as the current show has closed, and arranged to build from the artistically simplest, often the artwear modelled by children, to the most adventurous, being the open section. The in-show entertainment follows a theme – be it summer, the forest or long distance postal delivery – that permeates the between segment entertainment and provides a platform for the in segment entertainment; though getting from summer to opera to brides and back to summer again as happened this year was a visually and aurally interesting journey to take.



by Simon Litten

And at least at one point in the show the dancing will divert attention from the parade of art, not deliberately but because the dancers have risen to the occasion performing a piece that is worthy of a separate show; this year's "fall of colours" piece with static female dancers dropping gossamer curtains of single coloured cloth will stay in my memory more than the artwork that it was the backdrop to.

Another highlight of WOWA is the degree to which Wellington's window dressers have entered the spirit of the show. One can walk a crooked mile or two from the beginnings of Lambton Quay, via the byways of Featherston St to the upper end of Cuba St and be charmed by the cunningly dressed mannequins, with the florist on Waring Taylor St's effort being my personal favourite for this year.

Within WOWA the artwork, or costumes if you will, have a high SFnal component. Each of the costumes could be placed with little effort in Star Trek, Dr Who, Farscape, Babylon Five and so on. The only difference I can discern between WOWA and a natcon masquerade or an Armageddon cosplay parade is that WOWA tends to original design and that masquerades and cosplay tend to reproduction of known designs (note: I say tend, there have and will be noticeable exceptions).

What surprises me is the relative lack of attendance at WOWA of fans who are known for their costuming proclivities. WOWA is an annual event and thus easy enough to plan for. I urge any fan with an interest in costuming to make the effort and attend a show. The experience will reward the expense and may even inspire the attendee to start a costuming project of her or his own. I am nearly tempted to do something, but I am a consummate prevaricator and well skilled in displacement activity so have been able to avoid that temptation. But I do wonder what theme on an uncorked bottle Broderick Wells (now of Auckland) could produce after a visit to WOWA.

Uncorked by Broderick Wells

Things have not gone according to plan in the Wells' world over the past month. First, a pay TV provider decided that the Wells' mansion was in another suburb. Then they decided that they would deliver service on a different, and later, date. Then the aerial cable disconnected. "Where's *Saturn* when you need them?" is all I can say. Secondly, my book club are continuing to insist I pay for a book that I not only returned promptly but also advised them I had returned promptly six weeks prior. If they lose the third piece of correspondence I will not be a happy chappy. And thirdly my automobile decided, along with the law of gravity, that the best place for engine lubricant was the tarmac. Twice. I got to meet my mechanic several times more than I wanted.

But enough of this moaning. I've started reading a book (yes, Broderick can read literature longer than an *appellation contrôlée* label) concerning the demise of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front. While the subject is of little interest to most, I decided to satisfy a want of knowledge. Most people will have heard of the Battle of Stalingrad, which was a serious defeat for the Third Reich. Far fewer will have heard of the much larger and later utter rout that was *Operation Bagration*. This was the single biggest defeat the Nazis were handed and destroyed Army Group Centre, one of three Army Groups facing the might of the Red Army. I won't recommend the book, though, as the author has relied too much on German sources and not cross-referenced with Russian archives. The resulting text is a little unbalanced. Much better, but a bit harder to read, is Vitaly Gorbach's *Aviation at the Battle of Kursk*, which actually covers Operations Citadel (the Battle of Kursk), Kutuzov, which occurred almost concurrently with Citadel and was a Red Army offensive on the stretch of Front just north of the Kursk battles, and Polkovodets Rummyantsev at the southern edge pointing to Kiev. Put another way, it covers the period 5 July – 23 August, 1943 in the middle of the Russian Front. This is a much more balanced approach and while the title implies it is only concerned with matters aerial, also tracks what is happening on the ground - much activity was often focused on bombing, strafing, and more importantly reconnoitring the enemy. One obvious conclusion drawn is that everybody over-claims when it comes to objects destroyed. Tanks move up a weight class, whole squadrons are shot down, the enemy is utterly devastated; you get the picture. Where possible, Gorbach has compared after action reports from both sides and these often paint quite different pictures. You may wonder if these guys were in the same war. The only down side to this excellent book is the language: он по-русский. (What the use of an education if you can't do a little skiting?)

Anyhow, I'm impressed enough with Russian scholarship that I may acquire another volume in the series.



The Sky at Night – November 2011

It's the turn of Pegasus and Andromeda to dominate the northern sky. This area basically is dedicated to their story although we don't get as good a view from down here. For instance, we can't see the King and Queen (Cepheus and Cassiopeia) and some of Perseus is also permanently below the horizon. The monster is also there, represented by Cetus the Whale.

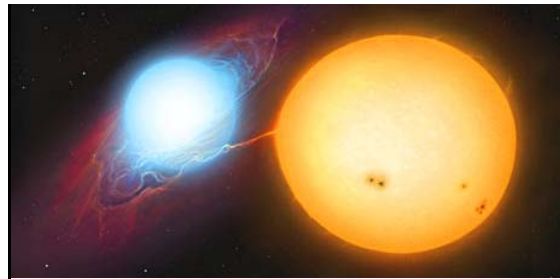
Perseus is notable by containing Algol, which was known as the Demon Star because it would vary in brilliance in a regular pattern, like a demon's winking eye. Algol is actually two stars that orbit each other and the plane of the orbit is aligned with our solar system. This means that, on a regular basis (just under three days), the apparent brightness of the star drops for ten hours. Algol is the best known example of an eclipsing binary. There is a third star in the system but it does not cause an eclipse. Extrasolar planets can be found the same way by watching for a slight dip in brilliance as the planet transits in front of the sun. Of course it's a very subtle dip so sensitive instruments are required to detect it.

Stars also vary in brilliance for other reasons and don't need a companion to do that. A good example is Delta Cephei where the star actually pulsates in a regular pattern. These are now known as Cepheid variables and are used as an astronomical yardstick as there is a relationship between luminosity and period. Cetus also contains another famous variable star, called Mira (meaning wonderful). At its maximum, it can get up to a bright magnitude 2, then fade all the way down to magnitude 10 – completely invisible to the naked eye. It takes nearly a year to for a complete cycle.

Andromeda contains the naked eye object (if you're under a dark sky) M31, which is actually a spiral galaxy bigger than our own. Both galaxies are on a collision course but it will take millions of years to get there. M31 also has 14 satellite galaxies, the brightest and largest being M32, which can be seen in telescopes as a fainter object next to M31. Alpha Andromeda marks the head of Andromeda. It as well as Alpha, Beta, and Gamma Pegasi, form the Great Square. Pegasus also contains the globular cluster M15, located near Epsilon Pegasi.

Cetus is actually separated from Andromeda and Pegasus by the zodiacal constellation of Pisces and contains M77, a ninth magnitude spiral galaxy. Aquarius and Pisces are high in the northern sky. Aquarius contains two globular clusters, M2 and M72 and the open cluster M73. It also contains the Saturn Nebula (NGC7009) and the Helix Nebula (NGC7293). By contrast the only object Pisces can offer is M74, a spiral galaxy.

There is a bright star overhead and would stand out as the area is rather sparse of bright stars. This is Fomalhaut in Pisces Australis. To the east, Orion should be starting to appear while to the west Scorpio is setting. This means that the Milky Way is skirting the horizon. The Southern



The Eclipsing Binary Algol in Perseus

Cross and the pointers are near the six o'clock position to the south, again near the horizon. This means that the two Magellanic Clouds are high in the sky and in a prime position for observation. The only visible planet around is Jupiter, although Uranus and Neptune can be found if you know where to look. Mercury and Venus are low in the west just after sunset. Mars is in the morning sky while Saturn is now behind the sun.

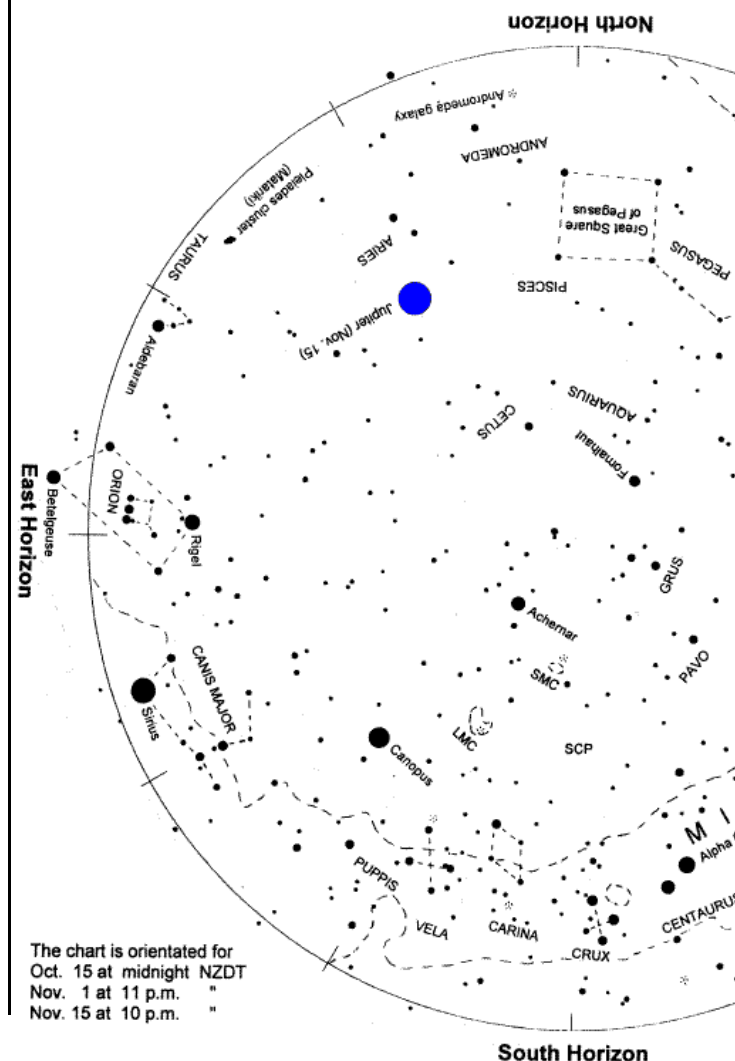
Events:

- 3rd November – First Quarter Moon
- 11th November – Full Moon
- 19th October – Last Quarter Moon
- 25th October – New Moon

A partial solar eclipse will occur on the 25th, visible in the very south of the South Island.

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>



by
Keith
Smith

Obits

September 16

Norma Eberhardt, (aged 82), American actress who starred in “Live Fast, Die Young”, and “The Return of Dracula”. She was “highly amused” when she discovered that her likeness appeared on a t-shirt worn by Slash on the cover of “Rolling Stone” in 2007.



William Hawthorne, (aged 98), British aerospace engineer., who helped develop the jet engine. He also invented Dracone flexible barges—which are used to clean up oil spills.



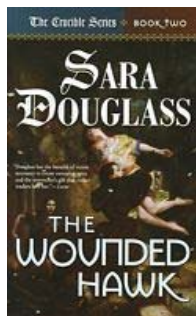
Tom Wilson, Sr., (aged 80), American cartoonist who gave the world “Ziggy”. (On a less postive note, he also headed up the creative team that developed Strawberry Shortcake and Care Bears.)

September 23

Carl Wood, (aged 81), Australian medical pioneer who invented test-tube babies (in other words, he headed the team which developed and commercialised IVF).

September 27

Sara Douglass, (aged 54),



Australian fantasy author, known for “The Axis Trilogy” and “The Wayfarer Redemption”, set in the fantasy world of Tencendor and Escator. She won three Aurealis Award for best Australian fantasy novel, and was nominated for several others.

David Croft, (aged 89), British television co-writer and producer of a string of classic comedies... “Dad's Army”, “Are You Being Served?”, “It Ain't Half Hot Mum”, “Hi-de-Hi!”, “Allo 'Allo!” and “You Rang, M'Lord?”. This man gave

us a whole lot of great laughs.

Wilson Greatbatch, (aged 92), American engineer, inventor of the implantable cardiac pacemaker, which saved a lot of people from dying prematurely and ending up in this list.

October 5

Steve Jobs, (aged 56), American computer entrepreneur and inventor, co-founder of Apple Inc. In the late 1970s, they made the Apple II, in the early 1980s, they created the Mac, the first commercially successful computer to use a graphical user interface. In 1985, Jobs left Apple and founded NeXT which was bought by Apple in 1996. Meanwhile, Jobs acquired the computer graphics division of Lucasfilm Ltd in 1986, which became as Pixar Animation Studios (and eventually led to him becoming a member of Disney's Board of Directors). Back with Apple, as CEO from 2000 onwards, spearheading the advent of the iPod, iPhone and iPad. If you own one of those techno-toys, you know who to thank.



Charles Napier, (aged 75), American actor, played the tough guy in lots of movies, including “Silence of the Lambs” and “Philadelphia”. He is known to Star Trek fans as the space hippie Adam in the TOS episode “The Way to Eden”, and as General Denning in the DS9 episode “Little Green Men”.



October 7

George Baker, (aged 80), English actor who playing Tiberius in “I, Claudius”, and Inspector Wexford in “The Ruth Rendell Mysteries”. He also appeared as Login in the Doctor Who story “Full Circle”.

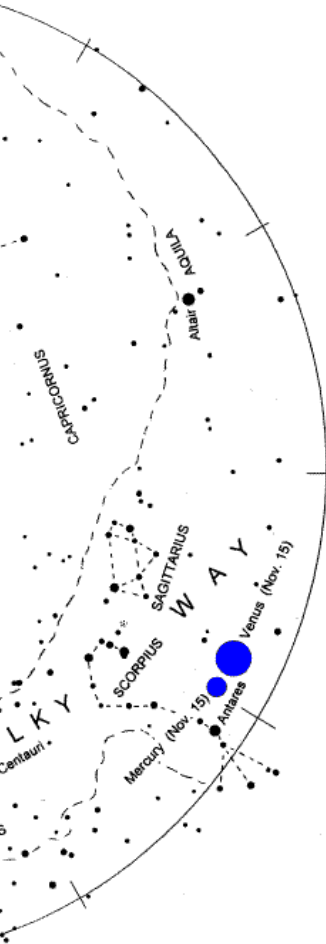


Paul Kent, (aged 80), American character actor known to fans as Lieutenant Commander Beach in “Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan”.



October 12

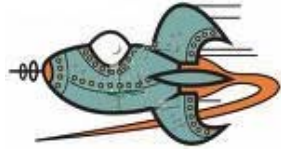
Dennis Ritchie, (aged 70), American computer scientist, designer of the widely used C programming language, and one of the developers of the UNIX operating system.



compiled
by
Jacqui
Smith

UnCONventional 2012

33rd New Zealand
National SF Convention
Auckland
1-4 June 2012



UnCONventional will be held at
“The Spencer On Byron”, located
in the North Shore suburb of
Takapuna.

We can announce that our Fan GOH is Lorain Clark. Lorain is a familiar face behind the registration desk of many a con, and she who works behind the scenes has not escaped notice either!

Our Guests of Honour have yet to be confirmed, but we are negotiating with a kiwi icon or two. We intend to use the convention to showcase the wealth of talent to be found in our own backyard.

www.unconventional.sf.org.nz

Look for us on Facebook.

This year, we have selected two
worthy charities:
WSPA and Breast Cancer NZ.

Both will appreciate your support.



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:

- DOS Saturday 19th November at Chez Smith.
(Disk-Oriented Surveyors)
- BOOK Monday 28th November at Maree’s place.
- SPACE Saturday 5th November at Peter & Anne
Hamilton’s place in Drury

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 16th November, 2011 at 7:30pm
Auckland Horticultural Centre,
990 Great North Road, Western Springs



Upcoming Events:

October 28th –31st Armageddon Expo 2011
ASB Showgrounds
<http://www.armageddonexpo.com/nz/>

June 1-4th 2012 UnCONventional 2012
33rd New Zealand National SF Convention
www.unconventional.sf.org.nz