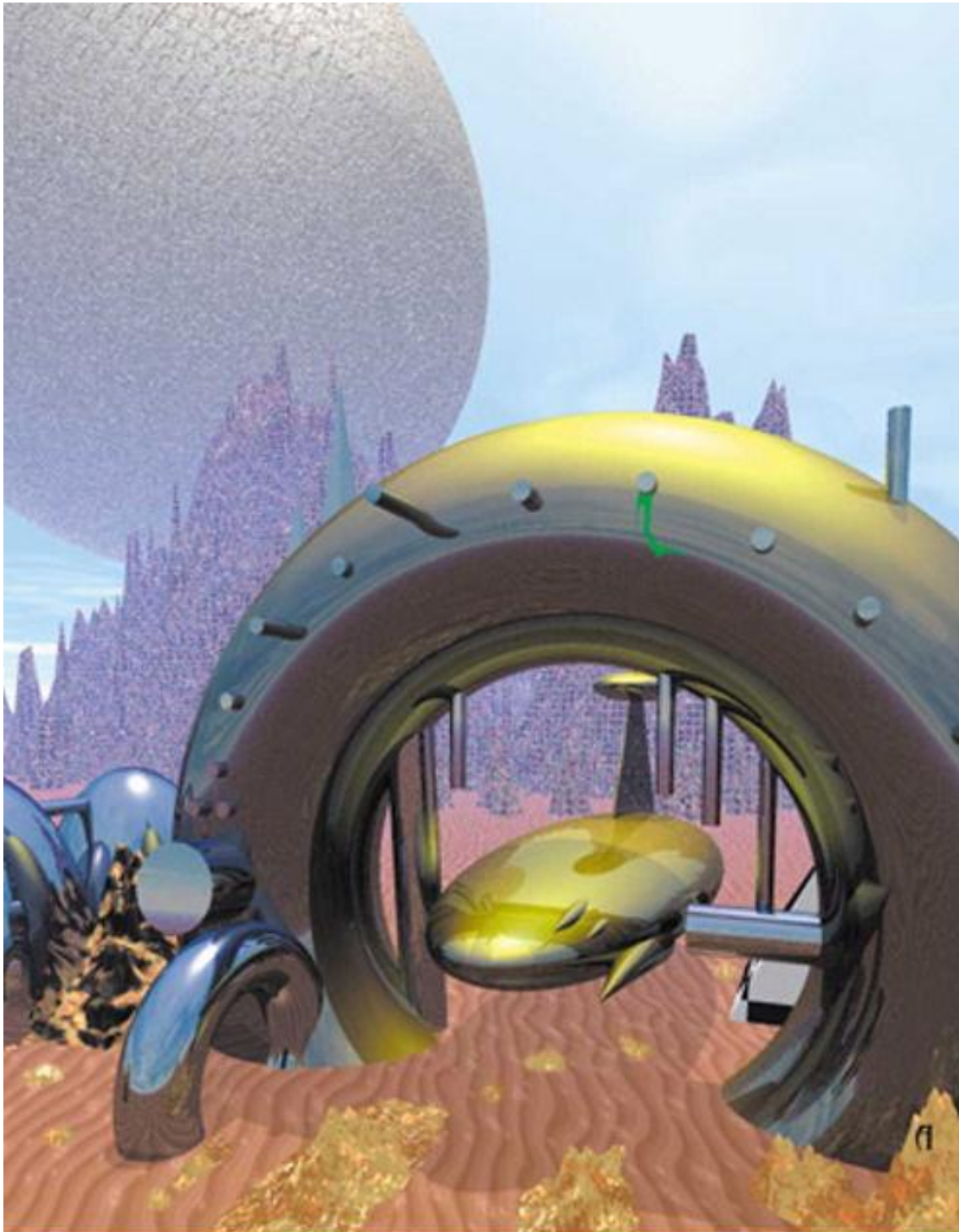


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**Journal of The National Fantasy Fan Federation
Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau**

Editor: John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904. Email kinethiel@mymetronet.net

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STAFF



Jon Swartz, 12115 Missel Thrush Court, Austin, Texas 78750, email jon_swartz@hotmail.com
Jefferson Swycaffer, Post Office Box 15373, San Diego, California 92175-5373, abontides@gmail.com
Heath Row, 4367 Globe Avenue, Culver City, California 90230, email kalel@well.com
Jeffrey Redmond, 1335 Beechwood NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49505-3830, redmond.jeff@hotmail.com

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Cover by Alan White: "Circledome"

Editorial



A Blast of Wonder

The "Sense of Wonder" which is so much a part of science fiction, but which is so seldom alluded to by people writing about or discussing science fiction, was being hotly discussed and promoted by people in fandom at one time, and was being most closely discussed in the National Fantasy Fan Federation, with words upon it being expressed by Bob Farnham, Marian Zimmer Bradley, and a contingent of younger fans to which I belonged, who had discovered the N3F and were in there and swinging, and who were reporting what they were saying and doing back to other people in that contingent, continuing to speak of it in their fanzines. The term, or approach to science fiction, was representative of this contingent and it may be said that it provoked a lot of argument and was thought to be certain people trying to get their viewpoint of science fiction across to many to exalt their own place in fandom. This contingent of younger fen (and fen was the term they used for themselves) spoke of Ghu, fuggheads, egoboo, crudzines, neofans, and whatall, and were described by Redd Boggs as "The Funlovers"; Bob Farnham said "No wonder they have a sense of wonder, they are young people and still feel a wonder toward existence", which brought Marian Bradley to say that she felt that the feeling of wonder was vanishing more and more from normal existence, which may happen when people are preoccupied with matters of importance when they grow older, but which should not be lost among them. I suppose those older fans would like to say to them, "What does it look like to you NOW?" but they are mostly not around any more, having disappeared from ongoing fandom when warfare started up which involved science fiction fandom. Sometimes, after all that time, you hear little recollective peeps from them, but those are accompanied by the creak of a rocking chair and mourning for Pepper, the dog who disappeared in THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND. These people called themselves Eighth

Fandom, but there was a movement underway among them to be Ninth Fandom instead. It may be that the wonder in science fiction fandom now is wondering what happened to everybody. Eighth Fandom appeared to have been destroyed. One looks at First Fandom still hanging in there. You might hear from them about Charles Burbee and his wife, Soccerro.

Fandom has energy, though, and Ninth Fandom may be bringing back fandom as it was, which doesn't even linger now in the memory of many people—and of course the fan-pro coordinating bureau regards any of this loss as deplorable, as does the history and research bureau. Renaissance or whatever, we want to see the past as well as the future.

So what we may be going to have is a blast of aggressive wonder, perhaps passed along secretly from generation to generation (one sees signs of this happening), and the recurrence of what, in actuality, never dies.

Magazines have had the name "Wonder" in them—Wonder Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Worlds of Wonder (do you see that this departs from science, which is all cut and dried, all known and adequately studied, hence perhaps no longer the concern of science and nothing to ponder about—just look it up in a reference book....but science fiction is not science, it is science fiction, and wonder is still alive in that), Air Wonder Stories—and there have been science fiction magazines devoted to wonder, I refer to Imagination, Imaginative Tales, Infinity, perhaps also Weird Tales among the fantasy magazines. In the mid and late fifties there was promotion of magic, the supernatural, and the use of the imagination. This was a considerable concern of Walt Disney, who on "Disneyland" discussed magic and the imagination at great length and whose films of fantasy were explicatory of magic..."You can do magic, believe it or not, bibbity, bobbity, boo!" ...and presented flights of the imagination, such as Alice In Wonderland and Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, which spoke for themselves. In the 1960s and 1970s there was a blast of "New Wave" science fiction, which had no-holds-barred counter-cultural writing and assaults on the culture as it stood, as with Ed Sanders' "Total Assault on the Culture", which was not really a very pleasant time for science fiction, as it showed defiance, revolt, anarchy, doom, degradation and even criminality, and was allied with the Counter Culture and the Consciousness Expansion movement. It was so argumentative that it was ignoring quality and inspirational matter. The writers were striving for imaginative perception, not displaying it. Look to Heinlein's STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND for comparison with the "Love Generation". People outside of science fiction were "blowing their minds" for expanded consciousness, particularly among the Beat Generation, which was becoming aware of science fiction and overlapping it somewhat. This thought of regaining wonder and imagination was apparently coming from science fiction.

This is not considered worldly and science fiction was criticized as being "escape literature", escape from the rigours of reality and earthly life. Were these *agents provocateurs*? There really shouldn't have been any argument with imaginative things (Bob Dylan: "You have many contacts among the lumberjacks to get you facts when someone attacks your imagination"), but these statements stirred up a lot of trouble and, thereafter, battling, a false alarm with backing behind it to keep it producing argument. Eastern disapproval of sorcery and illusion became involved, though science fiction and fantasy backed none of this, but people were being told that it did. I think everybody has seen how much science fiction writing went over to stories about warfare; many of the authors we've been interviewing here express warfare

concerns, and there is a genre of military science fiction. All very well and good, but should it be dominating every other viewpoint? Another concern of more recent science fiction is worldbuilding novels, which seem to ignore the wonder of things that are there by doing the creation themselves. Imagination runs wild in the works of Terry Pratchett but is mixed so much with scientific details that his writings are bogged down and overly dependent on the scientific factors involved. He seems to wonder what he has made, and is not clear enough about it to inspire feelings of wonder.

William Shatner spoke of the loss of wonder when describing his participation in a space flight. He says he used to value the wonder he felt when considering the vastness of things, but said that when he looked into space—the other direction from Earth—he saw only death. Of course he could commend himself at having survived the flight—there are those who did not. NASA's presentation of space flight seems boring, repressive of imagination and wonder, and heavily dependent on stark science under governmental control. The astronauts make formal statements about their flights which are chiefly all-encompassing cliches. It is largely devoid of the sense of wonder which is found in adventure and exploration, and Star Trek, beset also by scientific considerations and dogma, does not do much to alleviate this heavily materialistic attitude. Is this sf, or scientific experimentation applied to the running science fiction notions? The show has not been very original, drawing its stories from age-old plots, which it duplicates ineptly and without much departure from the mundane, their method being somewhat of an attack on the concepts involved as writers of the past have expressed them. Note that their spacegoing outfits are not very expensive or well-made; they resemble sack-cloth attire somewhat. A lot of the inspiration has gone out of science fiction in this series. And their science is largely manufactured and formed out of fantasy, which should not be the case in science fiction, where the science is a counterbalance and point of departure. Also, it is not necessary for science fiction to take place in space, but ever since the popularization of spacecraft on Captain Video, space transportation has been rammed back into science fiction.

Enough, though, of such grievances—it's not that I deplore science fiction that does not contain the sense of wonder, but that the science fiction that there is has come to be lacking that sense. Bring it back, and the science fiction would be fine. Some people, though, do not care two hells and a rap whether the science fiction is fine. They are not fans of it enough.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW: SHANE GRIES



The author writes: “For a little background on me, I’m a career US Army officer. I first enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1989, and then commissioned as an active-duty officer in 1994 from ROTC. I have been in the infantry ever since. I’ve served overseas for seventeen years total, spending time in Germany, Korea, Afghanistan and Australia. I am currently serving as the Army Attache at the US embassy in Canberra. I have a wife and two grown children.

“I started writing seriously three years ago at the urging of my wife and another old friend. I was offered a contract for a short story, so I took the plunge and wrote my first novel soon after that. It was a military science fiction novel and I signed on with Eric Flint’s **Ring of Fire** press. The first book was released nearly two years ago and I wrote and published its sequels soon after that, finishing up the trilogy last year.

After finishing the trilogy, John Holmes with **Cannon Publishing** asked me if I’d like

to write about a group of future mercenaries trying to make a living in the wake of a savage interstellar war. That book was released in March, 2022.

John Holmes then asked me to write a zombie apocalypse novel for him and I recently finished the manuscript for that one too. So, my fifth novel should be coming out in December.

Unfortunately, Eric Flint passed away a couple of months ago and his publishing house closed its doors forever. My original trilogy is no longer for sale as a result, which is disappointing. But I got the rights to the book reverted back to me and I'm currently re-editing them and I'll be shopping them around looking for a new publisher soon.

Here's the interview questions:

IO: How did it happen that you were urged to be a writer? Had your less serious writings shown a lot of talent and ability for doing more serious work? What kind of earlier writings did you do? Had you been having some of the writing published, say in magazines or newspapers or whatever? What was it like prior to beginning the writing you are doing in terms of your literary interests? And how did you come by the contract? What "machinations" were involved?

SG: I had basically dreamed about becoming a writer since I was a teenager back in the 1980s, but life sort of got in the way. I wrote some short stories back then and dreamed of writing a novel, but that never came to anything. After college, my career got started and I put writing on a back burner for many years. Then, I had an opportunity to write a short story for a John Ringo anthology in his "Posleen" universe. The story (it was really more of a novella) was ultimately selected and ended up in a promotional CD. This sort of motivated me to get serious about writing, though once again, life got in the way and it took a back seat to my day job.

Just over three years ago my old college roommate started pressuring me to get back to writing again. He was himself a published author by this point and he kind of inspired me. Added to that, my lovely wife told me I needed to get a hobby, so I took a shot at writing another short story for an anthology and to my surprise I was offered a contract for it. I was absolutely delighted and my motivation shot through the stratosphere.

The next thing I knew, I was writing a military science fiction book and ended up scoring a contract for that too. That book deal turned into a trilogy and now my fledgling writing career is off and running, with my fifth novel coming out soon.

IO: Clearly the military has been your major interest. How did you come by this interest? What drew you to enter the military?

SG: I don't really know. I was fascinated by all things military since I was a kid and have been fascinated, maybe obsessed with it since as long as I can remember. I started digging into World War Two history as soon as I could read. The first book without pictures I can remember reading was IRON COFFINS, an autobiographical account by Herbert Werner, about German U-Boat crews in the Second World War.

It seemed only natural for me to join the military and I did so right after my seventeenth birthday. I've been in uniform ever since.

IO: There seems to be a genre in science fiction now that is known as "military science fiction". You use the term regarding your writing and I am wondering if you had contact with other writers of military sf prior to writing your books and whether you were following tendencies in the growing presence of military science fiction or were going on your own way in this form of writing.

SG: I was in contact with John Ringo and Tom Kratman for many years before I wrote my first military science fiction novel. Both of them are military veterans, so their writing seems more grounded in plausible characters that ring true for people with military backgrounds. This is important to me just as I believe it's important to many other readers. Many of us look at war or military-themed movies and get immediately turned off when we see some error or mistake on the screen. We feel the same way when we read novels. Characters who seem unrealistic are going to immediately switch off the reader with military experience, so the details have to be right. I've done my best in my own writing to craft characters and situations that are believable based on history or actual experiences I've had.

As far as going in my own direction or following tendencies, it's hard to say. I've certainly had my influences and I incorporate my fair share of tropes into the stories, but at the end of the day I try to give the reader something fresh.

IO: Do you know anything about the start of the military sf genre or about the development of this particular form of writing?

SG: I really don't. All I know is that when a teenager, I read STARSHIP TROOPERS and THE FOREVER WAR. After that, I was hooked on the genre. The stories were (are) really great and they spark the imagination. I wish I had half the talent of Heinlein or Haldeman, but I'm just happy to get to play in the same sandbox.

IO: Where do we find your books on sale?

SG: You can find my books and short story for sale on Amazon for both Kindle and paperback versions. I am humbled by the number of people that purchase and read my work; it makes all the effort that goes into the stories worthwhile.

IO: Do any of your own military experiences go into the stories?

SG: Oh heavens, yes. My experiences and the experiences of others are woven into my work like a great tapestry. The dialogue, the scenarios, the personalities...it's all there. I wrote about a soldier who came home from a deployment to find his wife in bed with another man and he shot holes through the headboard of the bed with a shotgun. True story. I changed the names but the event actually occurred. That's one example, I've written about hundreds more.

IO: Where and how did you find your publishers?

SG: I've been a Baen Barfly for decades—and if you don't know what that is, I'm not sure I can explain it in a few words—I met some incredibly wonderful folks. One day after I finished my first manuscript, I briefly mentioned that I finished a book and

out of the blue, it turns out one of the Barflies was a senior editor with my first publisher. Next thing I knew I was being offered a contract. It was crazy.

My second publisher heard I'd just finished my trilogy and approached me right away, asking me to write something for him. Like a madman, I agreed. That was two years ago. Needless to say, I'm having a ball.

IO: Do you read a wide range of science fiction?

SG: I'm ashamed to say that I really don't. I read a lot more military history than science fiction and the truth is I don't even really know what different sub-genres of science fiction are out there. Having said that, I write the sort of things that I'd like to read.

IO: Are you in any activities surrounding the writing of these books?

SG: I've done many things over the course of my career that were related to the writing of these books. My twenty-eight years of infantry experience, my time working in an embassy, my posting as a speech writer and other assignments have contributed to my fledgling writing career. There have been a variety of things that have contributed. It's been a wild ride.

IO: Do you participate in any science fiction activities?

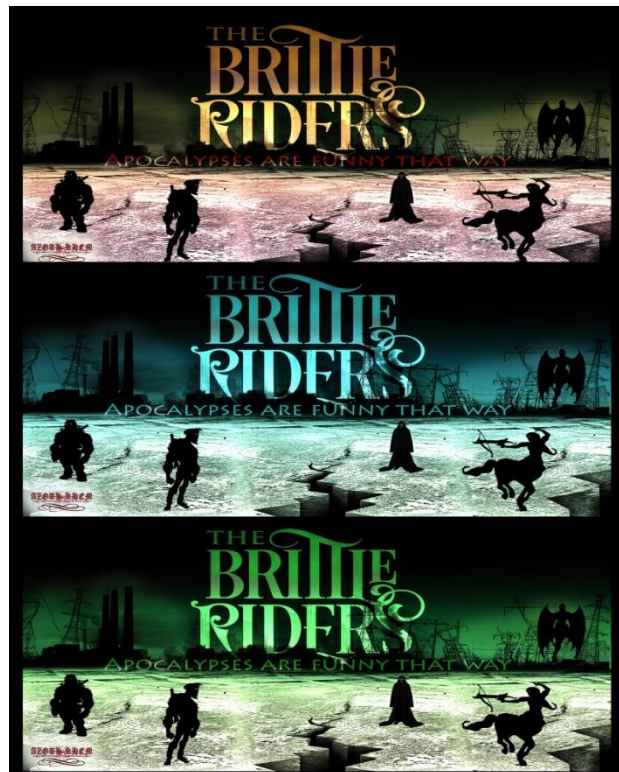
SG: No, not really. But I do plan on attending science fiction conventions in the future. Well, I plan to after I return to the United States anyway.

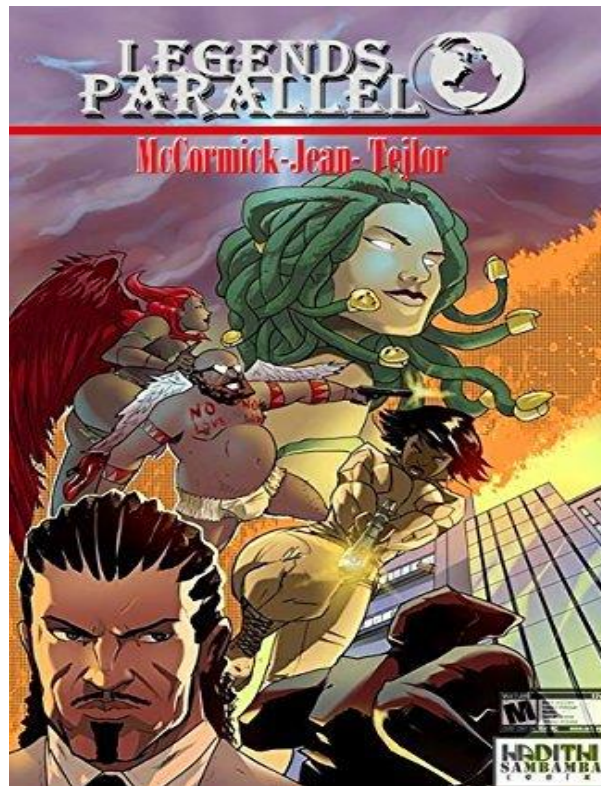
IO: Are there any other things you would like to talk about in this interview?

SG: I've really enjoyed the opportunity to finally write down the stories that have been rolling around in my head and share them with others. It's been a great learning experience and I look forward to doing more in the future.



AUTHOR INTERVIEW: **BILL McCORMICK**





Bill Says: “My novel, **SPLICE: HIT BIT TECHNOLOGY**, was voted best science fiction novel of 2020 by the Critters readers poll and was recommended by **Kirkus Reviews** to distributors and libraries. My trilogy, **The Brittle Riders**, is currently being developed for film and was lauded by Garrick Dion (producer, **JOKER**, **DRIVE**, etc.) as being ‘A very unique tone and world, reminiscent of **GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY** meets a **MAGNIFICENT SEVEN**/**DIRTY DOZEN** type setup, but with a look, flavor, and lexicon all its own. In a world where studios and streamers are looking for IP that’s expansive, both narratively and in terms of ancillary possibilities (prequels, offshoots, video games, etc.) it certainly seems to offer up a number of possibilities’. I have appeared in over twenty anthologies and have had several short stories published as stand-alone works. I have multiple comic book series out, have been hired to create a universe for an NFT marketplace in Viet Nam, and have the world’s oddest—and coolest—fan club in England.” His site may be found at <http://BillMcSciFi.com> . His email address in BillMcSciFi@gmail.com . He also has a Facebook page. Here he is:

IO: I note that some of your short stories appeared in **Bewildering Stories**, the long-lived netzine that was originated at the Analog Forum. I had a considerable number of short stories published in that netzine myself, early in its history. Maybe we've met. Were you ever in the Analog Forum? I see you were in Critters, which was discussed at the Analog Forum, which had some Critters members in it. How did you come to discover Bewildering Stories, if not through the Forum?

BMc: Back when I was first starting out, I submitted to any publication that slowed down long enough for me to figure out their address. In this way I discovered a wide variety of rejection styles, some meaner than they needed to be, and alternate venues for publication. One such venue was Bewildering Stories. By then I had read several stories they'd accepted and thought I had one that might, with a minor tweak or two, fit. I reached out to their editor, Don Webb, explained my concerns, and he told me to go ahead and submit it "as is". That story, "Vorbliss", earned me a two-page rejection letter which contained notes pointing out it was the most vile and twisted thing he'd ever read, while also being the funniest, and ended with a plea for me to submit something with fewer F-Bombs and zero sexualized nuns.

I followed up with a story called "And the Beat goes Phut", which was accepted almost immediately. Funny story, Phut was a tale about the apocalypse as witnessed by a DJ. The villain was a Middle Eastern intellectual. Bewildering Stories had slated its release for September 11, 2011, a rather important anniversary in America. I thought it was a ballsy call, especially with me being a new author, but I was all in. Sadly, someone rational interceded and the release was pushed back to November. That said, people liked it, asked for more, and my career was on its way.

IO: As an odd coincidence, the first story I had published in Bewildering was called "Future Futter", which was sent back to change the title, and so I changed it to "Future Flutter" and it was published.

SPLICE: BIT HIT TECHNOLOGY was voted the best Sci-Fi novel of 2020 by readers at Critters. Was there joy at critters over this vote? I know it is a writers' developmental society, doubtless always glad of a score. The Kirkus Reviews state that the book is Dark Comedy. Do you agree that this is so? Is Dark Comedy of the same sort that was called Black Humor back in the seventies? Are you familiar with the various writers of Black Humor? What do you think of that movement in literature if it was a movement?

BMc: Well, the "Black Humor" movement started in the 1930s and involved in finding humor in the most offensive things around. Death was a biggie. But, before it was named, it had been around for centuries. See Aristophanes' The Clouds, which led to Socrates' being executed, as Example A. "Dark Comedy" is something different. That's digging out the absurdities in difficult situations. In SPLICE the scene most people mention is when the titular character, still a ten-year-old black boy at the time, meets a massive white man and needs his help. Knowing full well the racism around him, he's scared and reticent and thus begins a new litany of descriptions for the man

in his head; the most popular one apparently is “Human Zip Code”. Other scenes, slightly more brutal, still manage to entice a chuckle from readers.

The funny thing about SPLICE being nominated at Critters is that I didn’t know it had happened until later. Voting was in progress when I found out and SPLICE was already near the top in vote totals. I let my readers know about the contest and they helped put it over the top. Critters is an incredible place for writers to hone their craft in a judgment free zone. I wish I had the time to participate more because there are some very talented people there. And, having talked to a few people there on a regular basis, I know they’re as happy as could be, especially now that the book is garnering national attention. It also didn’t hurt that I was able to show them that Walmart added the book specifically because of the award.

IO: What was involved in creating a universe?

BMc: Well, first, you create the firmament, then add the matter you wish to have inhabit it. In all seriousness, I tend to create characters first and then figure out the world they’d live in. For “The Brittle Riders” I began with Edward Q. Rohta and then worked out the kind of damage someone like him could cause. The death of every man, woman, and child on the planet was the logical conclusion, so I ran with that. Every character that appears is exclusively the result of that one man’s hubris.

SPLICE, on the other hand, was an existing intellectual property when I was brought in. I had to find a character I wanted to write about and then build off that. In the comics, SPLICE is a behind-the-scenes mastermind. I wanted to know how he got there. As it turned out, so did c Watchdog Entertainment -r- LLC, the owners of the IP. Based on public reactions, we weren’t alone.

IO: What was your radio show on Z-95 like?

BMc: “The Beat of Chicago” was a local music show unlike any other. I have the attention span of a flea on meth when it comes to music, so I listen to everything and that transferred over to the show. Beat had originally been started by Dan and Sandy Lavorini, two legends in the Chicago rock scene back in the 80s. When I took over, I moved the show from a suburban rock vibe to a free form exploration of any and all styles of Chicago music. Everything from industrial, to Hip-Hop, to Death Metal, to Glam, and anything else my little heart could find and enjoy, made it on the air. The show rated as well or better than national shows in its time slot and was even featured in The Illinois Entertainer. From 1986 to 1991 that show became the go-go place for bands who wanted their music heard. MTV legends, Enuff Z’Nuff, broke their debut single, New Thing, on that show. Ministry introduced their harder sound to an unsuspecting world on the show and then did an interview that almost got me fired. Live radio, many F-bombs, and some acerbic music will have that effect. Especially when the majority of your bosses tend to be conservative.

Sadly, as fun, and important as the show was, Z-95, the hosting channel, was owned by ABC and they eventually pulled the plug, preferring sane people to work there instead of me. I can’t say I had any valid argument against their decision.

IO: You're pretty outspoken on your blog. It seems existentially oriented or disoriented. What is your attitude toward existence?

BMc: I tend to agree with the only terse thing James Joyce ever said: "I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short time of space." Simply, I do the best I can with what I've got.

Blogs, in the main, seem to fall into two distinct categories: (1) I am all business. Just shut up and leave your credit card. I'll tell you what you've spent later. And (2), let me tell you about all the cute things my bunnies can do. If you like bunnies, you'll love my creations. Neither works well for me. While I do share personal opinions and stories, I also include links to support my releases to things like reviews, videos, and what not, as well as other links people can use for purchasing.

Although not traditional, since 2017 my email list has grown organically from the forty business cards I entered in manually to a MailChimp account, to many thousands that require a dedicated server and custom program to handle them all. One of the greatest compliments I get is "So and so copied me on this and I hope you have room for one more." I always have room, so that's never been a problem. Since 2018 my weekly newsletter has been the source for every post on my blog.

IO: You mention Cthulhu, the Illuminati, and the Apocalypse in your short stories. Are these things you find especially interesting? Apparently, you like science fiction, fantasy, and horror fantasy. What are some of your favorite readings in these realms?

BMc: Cthulhu, the Illuminati, and the rest may not exist, but they are great props for the imagination. I like using the impossible as a skewer for the real. It allows me freedom to comment on various social abominations without hitting readers in the face with a hammer.

Also, I'm not a fan of pure fantasy. The proliferation of elves and orcs should not be encouraged as far as I'm concerned. Tolkien nailed it and, unless you can do better, do something else; that's my motto and I'm sticking with it. Likewise, there's this odd and popular trope that all fantasy characters are morons. They'll have thousands of years to prepare for this or that impending threat and despite unlimited resources and numerous incentives, the only weapons they come up with are pointy sticks and, if they're lucky, a dragon or two. Granted, the recent proliferation of gratuitous nudity in fantasy tomes helps, but not enough to forgive the rest.

Still, for pure science fiction you can't go wrong with *A Canticle for Leibowitz* by Walter M. Miller, Jr. Odd humor, a fascinating use of a plumber's toolbox, and the birth of a post-apocalyptic religion are all handled with true panache. For fantasy, I still love *DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN* by Anne McCaffrey. Yes, it has dragons, but it also has rocket ships, real science, and believable worlds. Plus, her insight into future politics is not to be sneezed at. As to Horror, my first choice would be *The Andromeda Strain* by Michael Crichton. Taking something simple like a virus and showing how it could overrun a planet in short order has become the template for everything from *Contagion* to *Evolution* to many, many, more. Yet, in my eyes, none

have done it better. I will note that each author was a product of the times and some views they held haven't aged well. But those stories are still worth knowing.

IO: What is your general attitude toward literature?

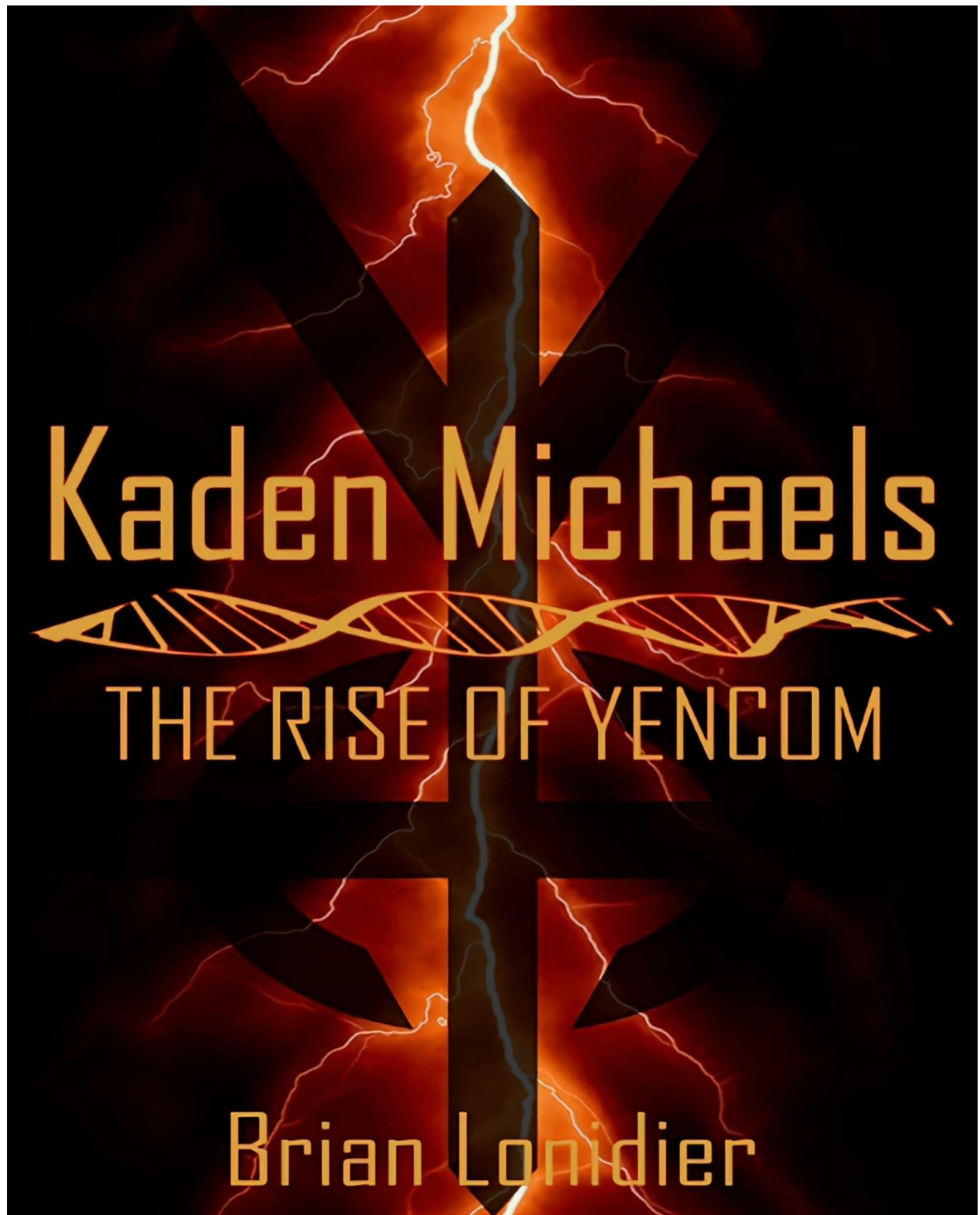
BMc: I'm a fan. I read a lot. Not just the genres I write in but autobiographies and books about sports, music, and religion, to name a few. I think that literature is the greatest weapon we have to prevent ignorance and those who attempt to quash it to justify their own petty fears do irreparable harm to society when they succeed, even in limited amounts.



UFO?

AUTHOR INTERVIEW: BRIAN LONIDIER





IO: Could you give me a rundown on the contents of KADEN MICHAELS AND THE RISE OF YENCOM?

BL: Kaden Michaels is about a guy who, by accident, discovers he has a special power. Yencom is a global tech company that has a vested interest

in people with special abilities. They discover Kaden and kidnap him to study him. That's when Kaden learns he's not alone in this world. There are others with abilities too. They work together to escape their prison, and escape. While on the run, they form an unbreakable bond and learn that family isn't by blood only.

IO: What process did you go through in getting your book published, after you had decided to return to writing? Did you advertise or discuss your book online?

BL: When I returned to writing, I didn't tell anyone what I was doing. The only people I knew were my family. After I finished the book, I sent it off to several literary agents to be told it wasn't good enough. Finally, I decided to go the self-publishing route. After publishing the book, I created my authors page and started to advertise it. I was a little backward on the marketing side of it; I didn't start to market my book until after I published it. It just didn't feel real until then, like if I started to talk about it, market it, and hype it up... then it would jinx it.

IO: Was your wife pleased by the book you wrote after you had finished and published it? Was there joy in the household?

BL: She was, my wife and kids were all very pleased. Actually, my kids were proud of me for publishing it, but they never read it. My son finally did read it recently, so he could do a book report on it. Now, he's pushing for the sequel to be finished. But there was a lot of joy and happiness after I published it; we were excited.

IO: What fan fiction did you write earlier? Was any of it published?

BL: I wrote Heroes, Marvel comics, DC comics, and even some Harry Potter. But NOBODY ever saw those. They no longer exist.

IO: How do you account for the great success Kaden Michaels and the Rise of Yencom had? Did it really become a national or international seller?

BL: Mostly, the success of the book is attributed to the town of Maypearl and my family. They bought it, spread the word, and helped market it better than Amazon or Facebook ads could ever do. And it really did become an international seller; I've sold copies in Australia and the UK. That was a COMPLETE shock to me when I saw that, but I wasn't complaining.

IO: Do you have a background of reading fantasy or science fiction? What authors have you read?

BL: I do. I enjoy reading fantasy. I've read the usual ones like Harry Potter and Percy Jackson, of course. I've also read Shayne Silvers and his Nate Temple series, R.A. Salvatore and the Drizz Do'Urden books, Chronicles of Nick by Sherlynn Kenyon, the Uglies series by Scott Westerfield, and the Sword of Truth books by Terry Goodkind. But I've also read and enjoyed For Whom the Bell Tolls, Catcher in the Rye, Great Gatsby, and others. I have a wide range of interests, but I would have to say that Fantasy and YA Fantasy are my favorites.

IO: What kind of activity has resulted from publishing your book, on the net or off of it? Have you benefitted from its publication?

BL: Well, since publishing it, I've gotten to be a little more popular online. My FB authors page is growing steadily, and I've become a bit of a local celebrity in my little town. I'm the manager of a local retail store, and people will come in asking for an autograph. It's weird because I'm not used to it or expecting it, but it's definitely not unwelcome.

IO: At what school are you a full-time student?

BL: I'm currently going to Texas State Technical College for my Associates in Cyber Security. I'll be finished in May.

IO: Is there any information you'd like to add about the writing of fantasy fiction?

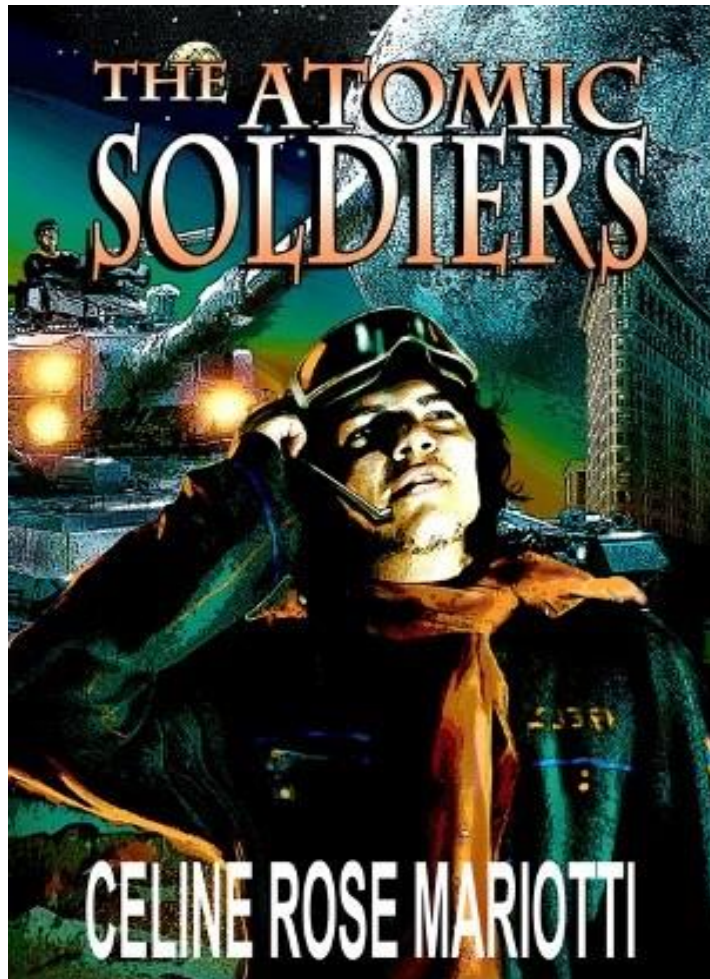
BL: The thing about fantasy is that you're only limited by your imagination. If you want a dragon that breathes soap bubbles and has a squeegee for a tail, then do it. Tell your story your way.

IO: What all might you have to say to people who have heard of you?

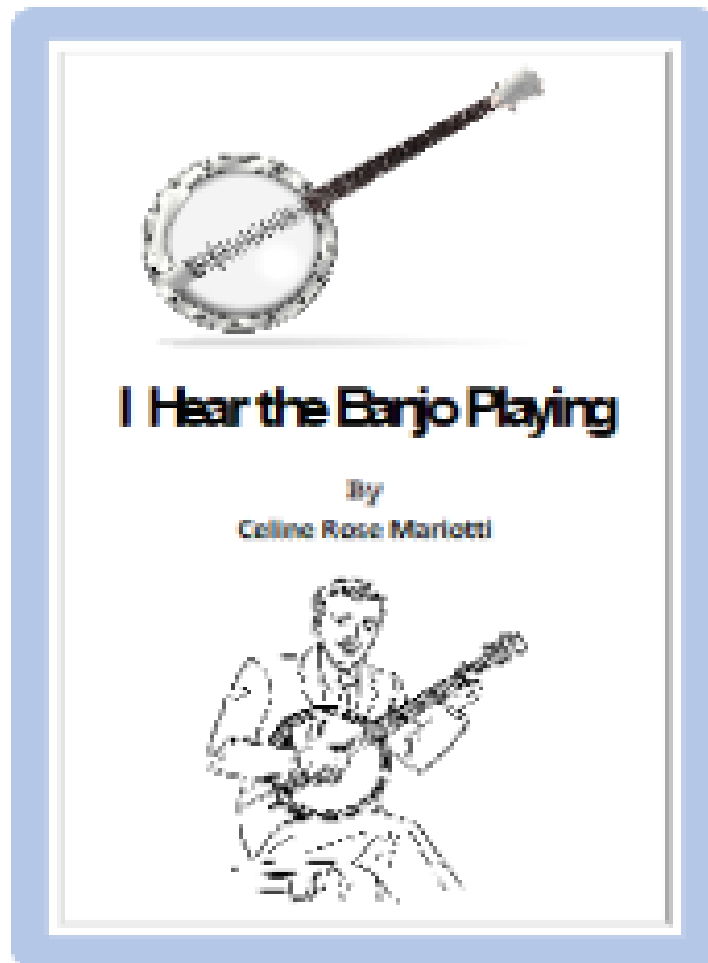
BL: All I can say is, "Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Thank you. If not for you, then I wouldn't be here now. You are the reason I write, and if not for you and your support, then I never would have had the courage to publish my book. So, thank you for believing me and for giving me the motivation to keep writing."

CREATIVE WRITING

A writer who has appeared in Ionisphere has published some books which may be of interest to readers wanting to see what she has come up with in the market. The three books displayed here first appeared in my own fanzine, and one appeared also in my netzine Surprising Stories. She is really on her way. Here is her advertising for these books:



Celine Rose Mariotti has a new young adult science fiction book, and it is entitled “Atomic Soldiers”. This is the story of the Capricorn-29 Spaceship venturing on a journey to the planet of Saturn. It is the year 2515 and all the people who were on Earth in the 1980s and 1990s are back on Earth again, President Ronald Reagan is once again the President of the United States. The crew of the Capricorn-29 spaceship encounter all sorts of alien spaceships and aliens who find a way onto their spaceship. But they are protected by a special military unit called “The Atomic Soldiers”. They meet up with the Russian spaceship, the Mishka, and they connect their two ships and travel together. Captain Vladimir Kisusky is very impressed with Captain Feldman. Captain Feldman relies on the Atomic Soldiers to help them and defend them against these evil aliens. Zach and Matthias are traveling on the spaceship with them, and they have all their atomic weaponry with them. It is a story of big adventures, aliens, a Robot who is a friend to the crew, and some interesting scientific information about Saturn. And a landing on Saturn! “Atomic Soldiers” is published by Hireath Publishing. Celine’s book is available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble.



Celine Rose Mariotti has a new ghost story out, one that will really make you believe in ghosts and the hereafter. George Bowman, a country singer and banjo player, had passed away after being very sick. His wife Melinda was left alone. But only a couple of months after George's passing, Melinda heard the banjo playing and there in the loft was George playing his banjo. This was the beginning of many appearances by George and each time he appeared he asked Melinda for a favor. She was sent on a quest to look through his papers for insurance policies, contracts with his record company, lyrics to his songs, and many other things he asked her to look for. Melinda together with her best friend Rose are on a journey to discover secrets about George's life. The story has a very surprising ending!

Price of book_____ \$12.95

Connecticut residents only—sales tax—6.35%---.82 cents. Total with tax—\$13.77

Postage—\$2.50.

If you wish to order, contact Celine at celinem@aol.com .

**The Return of
George Bowman**



Celine Rose Mariotti

Celine Rose Mariotti has a new book out entitled “The Return of George Bowman”, the sequel to her other book “I Hear the Banjo Playing” in her George Bowman series. In this sequel, George Bowman is back living his life on Earth, playing his banjo, writing his music, appearing on TV shows, recording a CD with his new partners Calvin and Jeremiah. Meanwhile, the ghosts of his old partners, who are up in Heaven, Floyd and Trey, continue to haunt him. St. Peter zaps George back to Heaven as he doesn’t like the way he is carrying on back down on Earth. But George promises to do what St. Peter asks so he is sent back down to Earth. To add to all the mystery and chaos, Richard Dawson and Mickey Rooney, who see that George Bowman got a chance to return to Earth, and his music career, both want to return to Earth themselves. They soon get their wish and Mickey Rooney resumes his acting career, making a movie, and Richard Dawson is on the Game Show Channel with his own new game show. All seems to be right. Till one day St. Peter gives George a special assignment. The mystery will continue in book three, “The Mystery of George Bowman and His Banjo”.

Price of book_____ \$12.95

Connecticut residents only—sales tax 6.35%-- .82 cents. Total with tax—\$13.77

Postage: USA—\$3.50, Canada—\$8.00, International—\$16.00

If you’re interested, contact Celine: celinem@aol.com



APPARATUS by John Polselli

Apparatus of
infinitesimal
beats.
Green grasshopper;
bulldozer
of
microscopic
labor.
Alarm of leaves
made waves—
ripples of
invisible
particles.
A signal of an
unseen monster
somewhere above
oaks.
The headquarters of wolfmen
below infinity.

2.

There is an
Arabian castle in
another dimension.
The grasshopper has
disappeared.
Lemon-colored apes
stand by a
maple tree.
An airplane drones
before the sun.

The barking of
mechanical dogs are
echoing toward
my future.
My face in the
mirror—a backdrop
of summer.

A robot of orange
passed
on a trailer
aby a maple tree
of shadows.

Invaders from Space by John Thiel

They came, they saw, they conquered, all three of these things, an acer

Their intelligence was far above that of mortal man. Whence they came could only be described as “afar”—it was beyond the range of our imaginations. But come they did, to our horror and woe. They seemed hostile but it was only a reflection coming from man, the actual host for them. Looking down on humanity with supernormal vision, they collected their impressions and began to experiment. What defeated them? Nothing much, but basically it was instinct that defeated them. Their invisible operations were *sensed*. They reacted with aversion to what they sensed, offing them and making First Contact an impossibility. No talk, no interchange, no success. Last seen trying to cadge “shots” at Nine Irish Brothers.

Basically, they lost the contest. But it was no real loss. Winning something like that wasn't worth it.



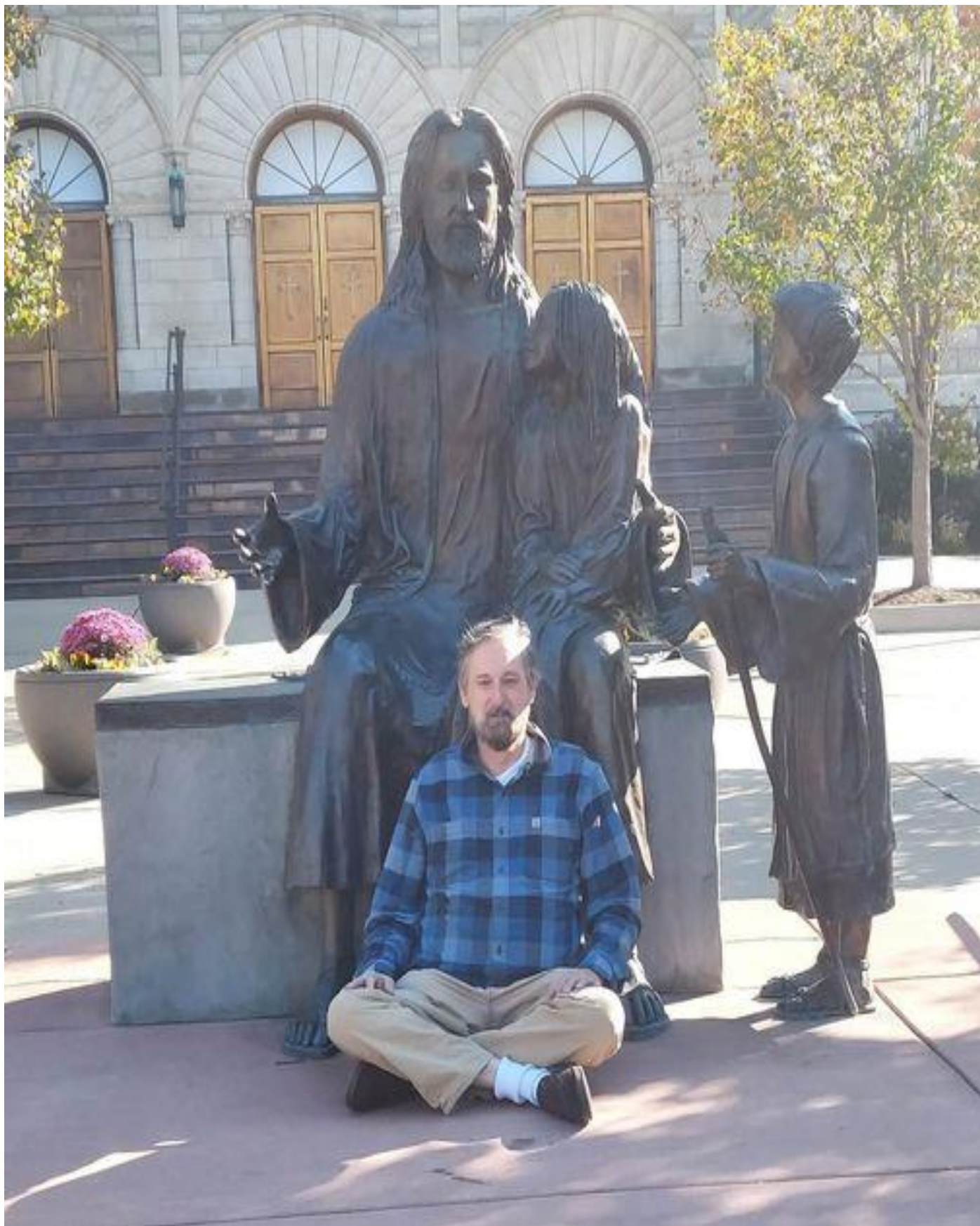
Art: “On A Pale Horse” by Tiffanie Gray, courtesy of the N3F art bureau

JEFFREY REDMOND



locality





FINAL WORDS ON THE ISSUE

Fine words on the issue, too, written in fine: it's a fine issue. It has some faults, yes. You can see that as well as I can, and conversely, I can see that as well as you can. But, if I'm not doing the best I can on the issue, I'm coming as near to it as I can, and I guess I have some interesting interviews in the issue. Take a look at them. They're plenty interesting. I've been unspeakably busy in the period of time since the last issue, so be glad I got things together as well as I did. I notice I look kind of isolated in this issue, but I'm not, really; as I type this I'm listening to Mountain Stage on the radio, and waiting for Acoustic Blend, and after that there'll be Blues House Party, and there are people in the basement. Much that was busy was the Holiday; people have decided to extend the holidays. So I'm taking them more seriously; on Halloween I challenged a specter on a bad street, and I gave thanks to Providence and to the people who brought in some fine food, after I'd been dining on Banquets for a month. Good issue, I decide, after having a good meal.



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