

The WSFA Journal
BUILDING BOOKCASES
By Michael Nelson

June 1999

The books are getting out of control again — time to build another bookcase!

Most avid readers choose to keep and display their books in some orderly fashion. Furniture expressly designed to hold books has been around as long as books. It can range from particleboard boards supported by concrete blocks to solid hardwood heirlooms.

People with time, some carpentry skill, and work space can choose to build custom bookcases to suit their available space and decorating scheme. But don't expect to save much money. With current lumber (and tool) prices and the amount of time required to finish a nice bookcase, Ikea or an unfinished wood furniture store may be a cheaper source for your bookcases.

My father built my first bookcase while I was in high school. Constructed from plywood and pine, it has faithfully held my oversized books for nearly thirty years.

Since high school, I have built six bookcases for my own use. The last three bookcases were built fairly recently since my daily commute on the Metro gives me plenty of reading time.

I build my bookcases tall, narrow, and just deep enough to hold many books in a small amount of wall space. An eight-foot high, two-foot wide bookcase for paperback books will typically have ten 5-1/2 inch deep shelves spaced 7-1/2 inches apart to hold close to twenty feet of books (roughly 250 paperbacks).

While adjustable-height shelves are versatile, I prefer fixed-shelf bookcases since a shelf tends to sag when it has no support in the middle. As a rule of thumb, for a 3/4-inch thick shelf fully loaded with heavy reference books, an adjustable particleboard shelf could span up to about 20 inches; softwood and plywood shelves can span up to about 34 inches; and hardwood shelves may span up to 36 inches.

Given their size, my bookcases are reasonably light and strong. In my relocation last year, I was able

to move all my bookcases by myself in two trips with a station wagon.

Since I live in an apartment without room for a workshop, these bookcases were designed to be constructed with hand tools and standard dimension lumber available at a hardware store such as the Home Depot.

My favorite bookcase wood is Philippine mahogany, which has a grain and appearance similar to true Honduras mahogany. It is less expensive than other hardwoods, has few knots, and finishes well with little effort since it is as soft and light as white pine. Unfortunately, the local hardware stores have stopped stocking it in the last few years.

Red oak, poplar, and maple are commonly available hardwoods. Oak and maple are expensive, heavy, and difficult to work with hand tools. Poplar is less costly and a softer wood but I find it to be boring and unattractive. This leaves the softwoods — pine, spruce, fir, and other evergreen conifer trees — as alternative woods. Spruce and fir are not usually available in grades suitable for furniture making. But with extra finishing effort, construction grade lumber can be your cheapest source of furniture building material.

As a comparison, the lumber for the bookcase I am building would cost roughly \$90 for D-select pine or \$180 for red oak.

I left out plywood, fiberboard, particleboard, etc. since large sheets can be difficult to transport and cut with just hand tools. And you must cover the exposed edges with some sort of trim if you wish your bookcase to look attractive.

Lumber companies such as Colonial Hardwoods in Springfield, Virginia (check the Yellow Pages under "Lumber"), can supply you with fine hardwoods such as walnut or cherry. There's also a Woodworker's Club in Vienna, Virginia. It's a do-it-yourself workshop and woodworking supply store.



If you have ever bought lumber, you know there are a bewildering number of grades, varieties, and sizes available. At the Home Depot, lumber is priced by the "board foot", which is a unit of volume, not length. A standard board foot is the volume of a board 12" by 12" by 1" — 144 cubic inches. To make things ever more fun, you are charged for the wood that is removed when the board is finished. For example, when you buy a 1 x 6 board, the actual dimensions are 3/4" by 5-1/2" — the rest of the board is sawdust left at the mill.

Lumber is graded by a number of factors. Is it finished on all four sides? How many knots, splits, or other defects are there per square foot? Was it air or kiln dried? Where in the log did it come — is it heartwood or sapwood?

I built my last bookcase in 1997. It was made with

red oak and is just one foot wide (I had very little room left in my old apartment). Since I have a three by eight foot sheet of quarter-inch plywood (used for the back of the bookcase) left over from that project, I am building a three foot wide bookcase for paperback books. (That should suffice for a few months.)

I decided to indulge myself and use red oak again. My new high-speed palm sander makes finishing hardwoods such as oak much easier and quicker. I expect to need three or four weekends to complete the bookcase.

I have included the plan I am using to build this bookcase. If you are interested in more information or plans for other bookcases, please talk to me at a WSFA meeting. Or contact me at michaelnel@aol.com.

The Phantom President

May 7th First Friday at the Gillilands. In the absence of both the president and the vice-president, Secretary Sam delegated the meeting to Bob so he didn't have to try to conduct the meeting with one hand while taking notes with the other. "This is a coup, the treasurer is taking over." The meeting was launched at 9:15.

There was old business. Lee Gilliland is organizing a trip to see *The Phantom Menace* on the 22nd. The movie theater operator is aware we'll be between 30-50 people. Sam Pierce said, "It will be an interesting Saturday with the Republican primary in the morning and then *Star Wars* in the afternoon."

"We also have the small matter of an election," said Secretary Sam. The treasury had \$4,708.18 according to Covert who read Bob's notes. Lee called for a party. Alexis, of the entertainment committee offered to let Lee go first. "I didn't know melons had balls but I balled a bunch of melons. They will be served later." Then Alexis said, "All right, I'll come down briefly." Covert decided that his last committee meeting will be at Twocon, the Eastercon for next year."



The Smithsonian event committee (John Pomeranz) said, "I'm holding forth in the back. Those of you who haven't read *The WSFA Journal* <such creatures exist?> don't know we put together a schedule and showed the Smithsonian event people. They loved it but said, 'How can we afford all of these people?'" Everyone laughed. Bob said, "They don't know us very well, do they?" John continued, "They do want to put in more fantasy elements and make the connection explicit." He then explained more about the event and added, "They will do all of

the advertising and we'll get some publicity."

Someone asked how much the event would cost. "I don't know but it will be cheaper for the Associates. Somewhere over \$100." Where? "Depends on how many people they think will show." Madeleine asked, "Does anyone know what kind of sprinklers they have in the Smithsonian?"

Chairman Bob called on Lee's other committee. "The Arlington Library wants us to organize a series of readings. They have a small art display and might be interested in a small exhibit of local sf artists."

New Business: Sam Lubell suggested organizing something on the traditional Disclave weekend. The club

yelled, "Out the Beach" Joe said, "If you want to go back to my brother's house, you'll have to ask him. Ah well. I'll ask Bill. I'll get back to the various and sundry. We can't have it on the 23rd because Candy's getting married." Mike suggested talking to him about other weekends.

Bob said that Judy is looking for judges to do the student contest. Pirate Lance said that BusinessWeek estimates 2.2 million people will sneak out of work to see *The Phantom Menace*. But he snuck into the Nebs. Richard and Nicki are up for Hugos for Mimosa. Joe is up for a Hugo for his cartoons. Mike Nelson volunteered to be the Hugo administrator for Chicon. So keep track of what you read. Joe asked if he was doing it by himself. Mike said, "So far but I do have some volunteers."

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32. Bob did some additional business and Lance paid his dues. Steve Smith took over for the election. All existing officers were re-nominated except for Trustee Chuck Divine. Instead Mike Taylor was nominated for a Trustee slot. The ritual reading of the roll was skipped since Bob didn't see anyone who hadn't paid.



Steve Smith was the only trustee present. He appointed Sam Pierce and Joe Mayhew to be temporary trustees. Steve explained the nomination system and our faux-Australian ballot.

The Trustee candidate for president is Judy Kindell. There were no floor nominees. She was elected by affirmation.

The Trustee candidate for vice-president is Elspeth Kovar Burgess. Joe nominated Sam Pierce. He accepted so the election required a vote. The winner was Sam Pierce, "I'm sure I can manage the duties."

The Trustee candidate for secretary is Sam Lubell. "Any other nominations?" Hysterical laughter was heard. Sam Lubell was acclaimed. "And there was much rejoicing," said Joe.

The Trustee candidate for treasurer is Bob Macintosh. No other nominations. Bob was acclaimed. "Let's have an audit," suggested Eric. The Trustee nominations for trustee are Mike Taylor "who's not here", Mike Walsh "who's not here" and Steve Smith "who's not all here." Sam nominated Lee Gilliland. There was an election and a long wait. The winners were Steve Smith, Lee Gilliland, and Mike Walsh. These officers took office June 1st.

Present: Sec. Sam Lubell, Treas. Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Steven Smith, 2000 Chair Covert Beach, Bernard Bell, Gail Dood, Alexis and Lee Gilliland, Eric Jablow, Joe Mayhew, Mike Nelson, Lance Oszko, Kathi Overton, Sam Pierce, John Pomeranz, Rebecca Prather, George Shaner, Madeleine Yeh, and the UN Election Observers.

The Redneck Jedi From the Internet

You might be a Redneck Jedi if.....

- ☆ You ever heard the phrase, "May the force be with y'all."
- ☆ Your Jedi robe is camouflage.
- ☆ You ever use your light saber to open a bottle of Bud Light so you don't have to wait for a commercial.
- ☆ At least one wing of your X-Wings is primer



colored.

- ★ You can easily describe the taste of an Ewok.
- ★ You have had a land-speeder up on blocks in your yard.
- ★ The worst part of spending time on Dagobah is the dadgum skeeters.
- ★ You have ever used the force to get yourself another beer so you didn't have to wait for a commercial.
- ★ Wookies are offended by your B.O.
- ★ You have ever used the force in conjunction with fishing/bowling.
- ★ Your father has ever said to you, "Shoot, son come on over to the darkside ...it'll be a hoot."
- ★ You have ever had your R-2 unit use its self-defense electro-shock thingy to get the barbecue grill to light.
- ★ You have a confederate flag painted on the hood of your land-speeder.
- ★ You ever fantasized about Princess Leia wearing Daisy Duke shorts.
- ★ You have the doors of your X-wing welded shut and you have to get in through the window.
- ★ Although you had to kill him, you kinda thought that Jabba the Hutt had a pretty good handle on how to treat his women.
- ★ You have a cousin who bears a strong resemblance to Chewbacca.
- ★ You suggested that they outfit the Millennium Falcon with redwood deck.
- ★ You were the only person drinking Jack Daniels during the cantina scene.
- ★ You hear . . . "Luke, I am your father ... and your uncle ."

THE COUSINS' WARS by Kevin Phillips
Reviewed by Alexis Gilliland

The wars in the title refer to the British Civil War, 1642-1648, the American Revolution, 1776-1783, and the American Civil War, 1861-1865, and I bought the book because it promised to put the American Civil War in a fresh context, as indeed it does. The nice thing about history is that you don't give away any plot twists or surprise endings when you

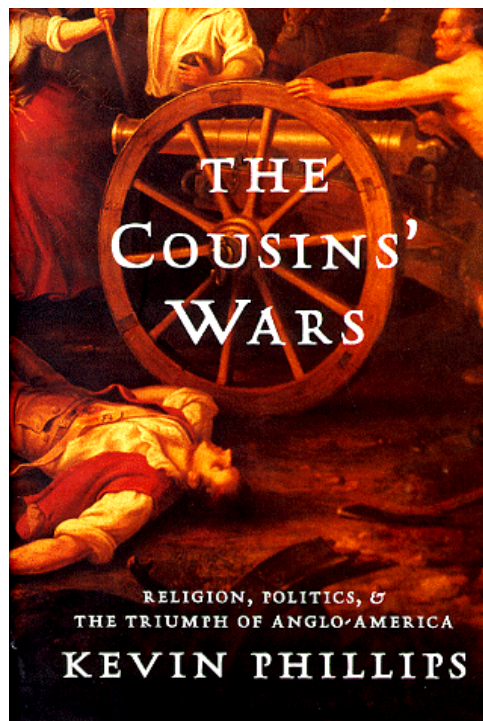
summarize a 700 page book. On the other hand, a summary brushes past a lot of closely reasoned argument. Still, I had not been aware of the extent to which the descendants of Cromwell's supporters were the leading rebels against King George III, while their descendants formed the hard core Yankees, in New England and Greater New England (a

diaspora which included the northern Mid-West and bits of the Border States.) Contrariwise, the supporters of the Stuarts--High Church Anglicans and Catholics--tended to be Loyalists to George III, and their descendants were inclined to a post-feudal mode of production, whose expression in post-1783 America took the form of slave-operated plantations, creating a regional establishment supportive of "the peculiar institution" which was, in turn, supported by the regional organized religions. The Southern Presbyterians, the most radical of the Southern churches, went so far as to assert a biblical justification for slavery. Phillips unscrambles the demographic omelette to show who went where, and how their subsequent politics--and rhetoric--was shaped by the great wars the winners and losers had fought.

Let us begin with the British Civil War; in March, 1625, Charles I became King of England and Scotland, and in May of that year married Catholic Princess Henrietta Marie of France, causing Protestant England to become paranoid about Popish plots, real and imagined. In 1629 Parliament passed resolutions against the King's religious and fiscal policy, and was dissolved for eleven years, until the King's in-yo-face religious policy provoked a war with Scotland. In April, 1640, Parliament--the Short Parliament--was reconvened to fund the war, refused, and was dissolved in May. In August,

a Scottish army crossed the border to occupy Newcastle, and in November the King called Parliament--this time the Long Parliament--back into session because he had no other choice. In the fall of 1641 a rebellion of Irish Catholics slaughtered thousands of Irish Protestants "in the King's name," and war became unavoidable. Reacting to the nature of his adversaries (Charles's opposition consisted of Puritans, Low Church Anglicans, Scotch Presbyterians and wildly assorted dissenters) the King's supporters were High Church Anglicans, and Catholics, mainly Scotch Highlanders and Irish. In the event, Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army defeated and executed the King, establishing a Republic which worked badly for Cromwell and not at all for his son, Richard. In 1660, came the Restoration and King Charles II, payback time for the Puritans and their allies.

Given the existence of the New England colonies with their established Protestant churches--which between 1620 and 1640 had received 80,000 English, then about 2-percent of the population--the most radical of the intransigent Cromwellians had a place of refuge. A map compares the place names in Eastern England (Puritan country) with those around Massachusetts Bay; more than a score of names are reprised in the colony, including Boston and Cambridge. As the politics of Great Britain swung back and forth, the losing factions naturally settled different areas of the



colonies because they couldn't stand each other. Thus a Congregationalist (Puritan) settlement from Connecticut was driven out of Virginia and into Maryland. Later, during the time of Cromwell's Republic, a lot of Anglicans and Catholics also chose exile in the colonies, but in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland, whose politics were more congenial than New England's. Royalist pretensions aside, Virginia and Maryland also served the Crown as penal colonies.

In 1763 Britain and France signed the Treaty of Paris, to conclude the Great French War. Britain got Florida from Spain, and Quebec and all the territories east of the Mississippi from France. For a brief moment, the Atlantic was a British lake separating a British Empire (called the First Empire) ruled by George III. However, the British people were profoundly divided by the British Civil War, and this division was reflected in the mother county which was predominantly Anglican and Tory, and in the new land which was already a mixed lot, but predominantly Puritan

(Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Quaker, etc.) and Whig. Phillips derives Whig from "Whigamore", an epithet applied to the Presbyterian

Scotch-Irish, and finds the first use of "Torie" applied to Irish Catholic guerillas. In London, Parliament, which ignored the whingeing of Whigs and dissenters at home, had no difficulty ignoring the whingeing of Whigs and dissenters across the sea. In what became the

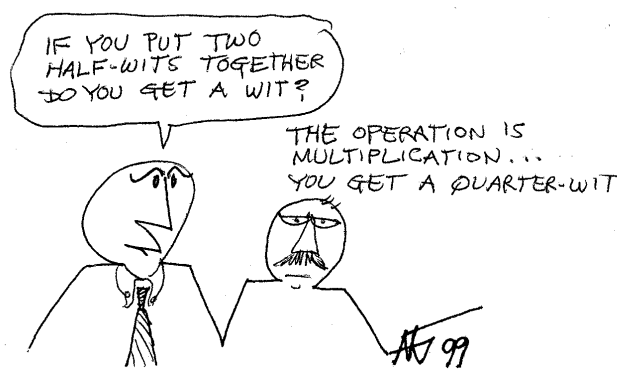
colonies the three major centers of discontent were in New England with its strong Puritan roots and tradition of smuggling, in south-central Pennsylvania, where about 200,000 Ulstermen migrated in five waves between 1717 and 1775, (An unruly lot, they were lowland Scotch Presbyterians whom Cromwell settled in Northern Ireland to subdue that wild frontier; they then migrated to the New World to escape economic hard times. At one point George III called the Revolution "a Presbyterian war.") and in Virginia, the tidewater planters, Washington and Jefferson among them, who felt seriously shortchanged in their business dealings with the mother country. Loyalists tended to be High Anglicans and Catholics, as well as Dutch and Germans, and, in British occupied areas (like New York City), opportunists and Loyalists following the line of least resistance.

Nevertheless, when war came in 1776, it was not universally popular on either side of the Atlantic. Many Americans felt they were

being put upon by the high handed Yankees, and merchants who looked eastward had organized High Anglican churches as a counterweight to the Puritan influence. Across

the water lots of common people had relatives in the colonies, and a number of high ranking officers refused to serve against the colonies.

Command in the field eventually devolved upon General William Howe, whose mother was the daughter of George II by his mistress.



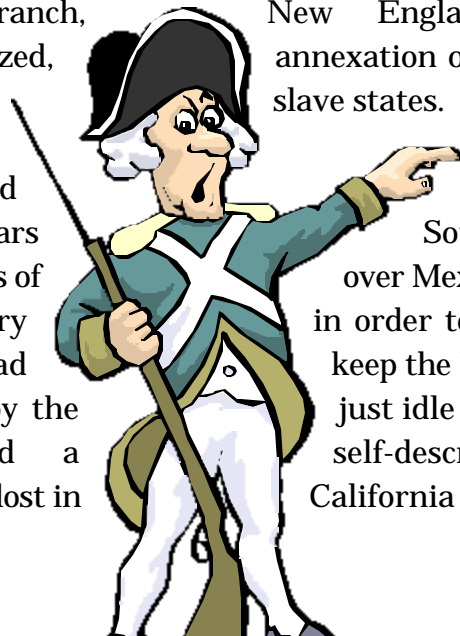
Howe was not only connected to the Royal family, but a Member of Parliament from a strongly "conciliationist" district, and also a Peace Commissioner, charged with finding a political solution to the insurrection. Did our boy have a conflict of interest? His strategic decisions are consistent with the theory that he was working for Gen. Washington and American Independence but there is no proof and when he died in 1808, his widow burned his papers. As the war dragged on, the French, seeking revenge for losing in 1763, entered the war against Great Britain, and on October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, when the French fleet drove off the British fleet coming to his aid. That was the de facto end of the war, as Parliament voted to end offensive operations in America in February 1782, although the British didn't evacuate New York City until the end of 1783.

The aftermath of the American Revolution, which was in many respects a continuation of the British Civil War, was, like that earlier conflict, passionate and bitter; about 100,000 Loyalists emigrated to Britain or Canada, as the winners seized the property of the losers, and banned them--and the neutrals--from voting or holding office.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Great Britain reorganized, reformed, and won the Second Empire, centered on India. The success of Wellington and Nelson in the Napoleonic Wars surely had roots in Britain's loss of America and the necessary changes which losing had provoked. France, inspired by the American Revolution, had a revolution of its own; what got lost in

translation was that the American Revolution paid close attention to Cromwell's revolution, so that Washington & Co. had a horrible--and widely known--example to profit from. Alas, even if Robespierre & Co. felt that Cromwell had something to tell them about the aftermath of killing one's King, English history did not resonate with the French. As an aside, ruling India was far more congenial to the Tory upper class than administering the colonies would have been, and the differences between Great Britain and America are, again, an echo of Cavalier and Roundhead, as the former went for Empire, to become an evolved Tory society, while the latter was more egalitarian, to become an evolved Whig society.

In 1791, when the Constitution was drawn up to replace the unsatisfactory Articles of Confederation, the issue of slavery went unresolved, laying the foundation for the American Civil War. The rival systems, industrial capitalism in the North, and the more feudalistic agrarian slave-holding capitalism in the South cooperated, but they were also in competition. One of the reasons that Mexico only lost California and New Mexico in the Mexican-American war was that New England wouldn't permit the annexation of territory destined to become slave states. Note is taken of the Knights of the Golden Circle, a pre-Confederate group of Southerners who aspired to take over Mexico, Cuba and Central America in order to provide more slave states to keep the Union in balance. This was not just idle talk, either; William Walker, a self-described filibuster, seized Baja California but couldn't hold it, and then



seized Nicaragua in 1853, made slavery legal, and invited immigration. Again, he couldn't hold what he had taken; for his trouble, he was shot in 1854. Secession probably could have taken place peacefully as late as 1854; but the South was not inclined to walk away from the Union while it looked like they were winning. Phillips tracks the politics of the period, and is particularly interesting on the decline of the Whigs, the New England-based heirs of the Federalists. A dour lot, like their Puritan ancestors, the Whigs were anti-expansion, pro-Blue Laws and pro-Temperance, and they tried to straddle the issue of slavery. When Lincoln was elected in 1860, his strongest support--like that of Fremont in 1856--came from ex-Whigs, but Lincoln, who ran as a moderate, picked up enough votes in the border states to win with a plurality of 39.4 percent in a four way race. When a "Black Republican" became president, the South finally decided to secede, but by then it was too late to do so peacefully. As had been the case in the two previous civil wars, losing had serious consequences; military occupation, South Carolina, the first to secede was also the last to be occupied; disenfranchisement, under reconstruction ex-slaves could vote, but ex-CSA officers could not; and heavy taxation was imposed, providing pensions to Union vets, but not to ex-Confederates. The confiscation of Southern real estate didn't happen, but it was a close thing, and there was no compensation for war damage or freed slaves, which wiped out most of the region's capital. American political arrangements after the Civil War persisted unbroken for 67 years, until 1932 when the Great Depression discredited the Republicanism of Coolidge and Hoover.

What was new to me was the tidal effect on the politics of Great Britain. The ruling class was Tory, and discreetly pro-South. This discretion was in part a reaction to Prime Minister

Palmerston who had a history of meddling in the affairs of other nations--and was outspokenly anti-Yankee. At first, the English middle classes felt the South ought to be allowed to secede, just as the Colonies had seceded from the British Crown.

What swung them to the North was Lincoln's Declaration of Emancipation, and the Union victory in some measure aided the struggle for a democratic franchise in Great Britain, with the reforms of 1867 which were expanded in 1884. Note also that Great Britain retained its established church as one of the pillars of the realm, while America, out of sheer necessity, disestablished itself--there were too many rival churches in competition to permit one to be top dog. A side effect of this enforced tolerance was that Irish and German Catholics, speaking Gaelic and German in the main, remained Catholics, but because they were not under siege, eventually became English speakers. (The numbers are significant: out of 250 million in the 1990 census, 100 million claimed German or Irish ancestry.) The Cold War, roughly 1946-1989, gave Catholics and Protestants a common



enemy (Godless Commies), enabling the Catholics to be integrated in a what had originally been a Protestant society, defined to a large extent by its paranoia about Papist Plots. The Cold War redirected that paranoia to Communist Plots, instead, annealing an old, old strain in the body politic.

The panoramic view of history which Phillips presents is very helpful in giving one perspective. Injustice to Blacks and Indians has been with us from the beginning, perhaps as a means of defining "us". Considering where we came from, our present society is more secular and more tolerant. True, moving in the opposite direction would have been really hard, but some people still want to go that route. We also see that political paranoia is not new, and may be regarded as the norm rather than an aberration. America selected for paranoia inasmuch as many people who would eventually become Americans were paranoid or they wouldn't

have left home. Again, our 20th Century drug laws are rooted in Prohibition, which was rooted in the Temperance movement of the 19th Century, which was rooted in the Puritanism of the 18th Century. Recently there have been signs of mellowing, possibly because the Puritan Churches, having achieved their major goals, lost the fire of fanaticism that burned so brightly in an earlier day. Fanaticism is still in evidence, though; Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority is mainly Southerners, and Pat Buchanan, his co-belligerent in the Culture Wars, is a Catholic. Two Tory groups which were losers in the three big wars, and might for that reason feel unfulfilled. A question which remains to be answered is: Can a Republican party led by its Tory wing retain the support of mellowed out-Whigs which it needs to govern?

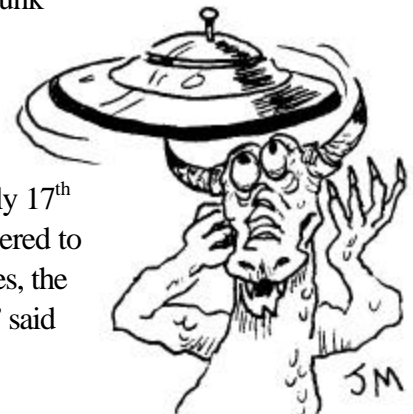
I enjoyed the book, and recommend it for those interested in American history.

"Don't Drink the Tadpoles"

The May WSFA Third Friday meeting took place at the Ginters on 5/21/99. "Let's have a meeting" said Judy, the once and future prez. "Any old business?" "There was an election last meeting," said Sam. "You won." He announced the other officers. Bob paid up our insurance. We have \$4,192.76. "Let's have a telephon." "Let's hold up an old folks home."

"We have a convention chair somewhere," said Judy. Covert popped his head in from the kitchen and said, "the press of current events has pressed me for time. I work for the Defense Mapping and Imagery." The Entertainment committee reported a trip to see *Star Wars I* tomorrow at the Skyline Drive and Mall, "My end is to pay for the tickets and then bill the treasurer," said Alexis.

Joe has two committees. The committee to do something about junk reported "Bob, Mac, Mike Nelson and I went through stuff at the clubhouse. We will share some stuff and give BSFS what we don't want. They will share their stuff should we have do another dog and pony show." The other committee is a 1999 Disclave, "We had one?" said an amazed member of the club. Joe will hold a ~~Disclave~~ picnic at his brother's yard. Not soon. Either July 17th or July 31st. The club voted on July 17th and Joe said Mike Nelson had volunteered to coordinate. <See Mike Nelson's article in this issue, no not the one on bookcases, the other one.> "Do you have a witness?" asked Sam Pierce. "He emailed me too," said



Judy. Joe said, "I think we should make it a covered dish affair. Bill said we can come in the early morning and stay until late. Last time we went till it started to rain. Does anyone have a problem with Mike Nelson running it?" Sam Pierce asked, "After what he did for Disclave? Let's keep this quiet so the sprinkler guys don't show." Joe assured the club that, "My brother's sprinkler runs differently." What time should it start? People said noonish so Joe said, "It will start about 11. Parking and directions to come. Near the painted giraffe. The sign with a boy and girl holding hands, underneath it says, 'hump'.

"Okay," said Judy, "We've covered old business. Any new business?"

Erica announced, "We're going to Australia." "Bye!" said the club. Sponge jokes were made then Erica continued. "We'd like to switch meeting locations for August. We're not coming back until after the Thrid Friday in September so you are homeless. You and the outside cats." Alexis said that "The First Friday in September will be at our place as usual. But the Third Friday in September we're looking for a place."

Elsbeth said, "There is a question over what the job of the VP is." <I think the title makes it clear, president of the vice.> Joe said, "The constitution says the duties are as in Roberts' rules, to preside in the absence of the president. Also the VP is a member of the executive board of the club." Bob said, "The VP will assume the President's duties in the absence of the president." Lee Strong asked, "Why are we bringing this up?" Elspeth asked, "Does it say what the VP shouldn't do?" "Don't pick your nose in front of the meeting. Don't get into big feuds or little ones."

Sam asked for submissions to the celebrated *WSFA Journal*. <Thanks to all who contributed to this issue.> Submit or die. Erica filled the meeting in on the new house rules. "Don't bite the cats, we take the cats' side. There are tadpoles in the pretzel jar. Don't drink the tadpoles. One died. We had a lovely funeral. Burial at Sea." Sara had books to sell. She's moving to Southern Georgia. "I'm engaged to someone in the army. I've been in WSFA for 2 ½ years and never seen a Disclave. So it's my fault."

Joe sold three more cartoons to Asimovs. Candy Myers is registered at the Home Depo. Get her a gift certificate and she'll do cartwheels. Erica said that Candy got married in her house where Judy is sitting because the military threatened to send her overseas. "So if you see John Matting, say congrats to the war bride." Abner has movers, \$90 a person for three hours. They will do packing and will move July 3rd. But he will attend Autocon.

Lee Strong said that three reorganizations equal one coup de ta, but not so much fun. "My organization is doing the 7th or 8th reorganization. I am now the space management officer." Lee Strong accused Lee Gilliland's turtle of being communist for going to the bathroom on his checkbook. The meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:51.

Present: Prez Judy Kindell, VP Elspeth Kovar Burgess, Sec. Sam Lubell, Treas. Bob MacIntosh, Trust. Steven Smith, 2000 Chair Covert Beach, Bernard Bell, Alexis and Lee Gilliland, Erica and Karl Ginter, Eric Jablow, Keith Lynch, Joe Mayhew, Abner Mintz, Shirl Phelps, Evan Phillips, Sam Pierce, George Shaner, Colleen Stumbaugh, Lee Strong, Michael Taylor, Madeleine Yeh, Meredith Wagner, Patrick Katze, Mary Burrett, Ron Kean, Heri Bell, Linda Lyons, Daniel Houne. Lee Strong paid his dues.

Madeleine Reviews:

Fortress in the Eye of Time, Fortress of Eagles, Fortress of Owls by C. J Cherryh

Reviewed by Madeleine Yeh

These are the first three in a four book series. These are extraordinarily good. I bought Fortress of Owls, as soon as I saw it, in hardback. Then I reread its prequel, Fortress of Eagles; and then I reread the first book, Fortress in the Eye of Time again.

One wizard has been responsible for the overthrow of two dynasties and the total destruction of their capitol cities; together with all their inhabitants. Mauryl Gestaurien, one thousand years ago, destroyed Galasien, the capitol of the Galasieni Kingdom and raised the Sihhe to be Kings over Men. Sixty years ago he destroyed Althalen, the capitol of the Sihhe Kingdom. The kingdom split, and the Marhenan dukes made themselves kings of the largest part, Ylesuin.

Now finally Mauryl Gestaurien is now dead. He has left one last legacy. The last great magic of his life. The Shaping of a human body out of nothing, and the summoning of a soul to inhabit it. This shaping, Tristen, does not know why he was summoned; or what or who he used to be.

What did Mauryl want? Is Mauryl's magic still acting upon Tristen? What will his last creation do? Is it harmless? Friendly? These questions are left to trouble the other characters in the story: Cefwyn, grandson of the murderous Marhenan usurper; Emuin, the last wizard, Mauryl's last student; Idrys, commander of the Prince's Guard; and Ninevrise, Regent of Elwynor.

Elwynor, the other piece of the old Sihhe Kingdom, has long been waiting for their king. A prophecized Sihhe King, even though Selwyn Marhenan had killed every member of the old royal house and every claimant to that legacy. Is Tristen that king?

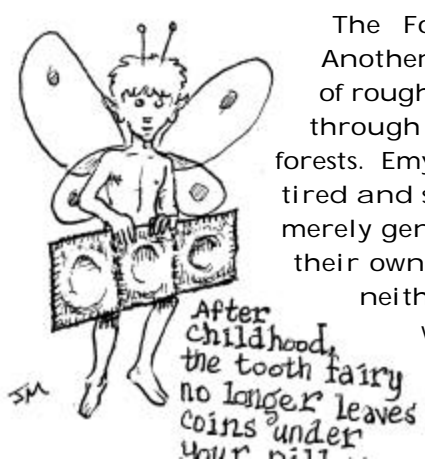
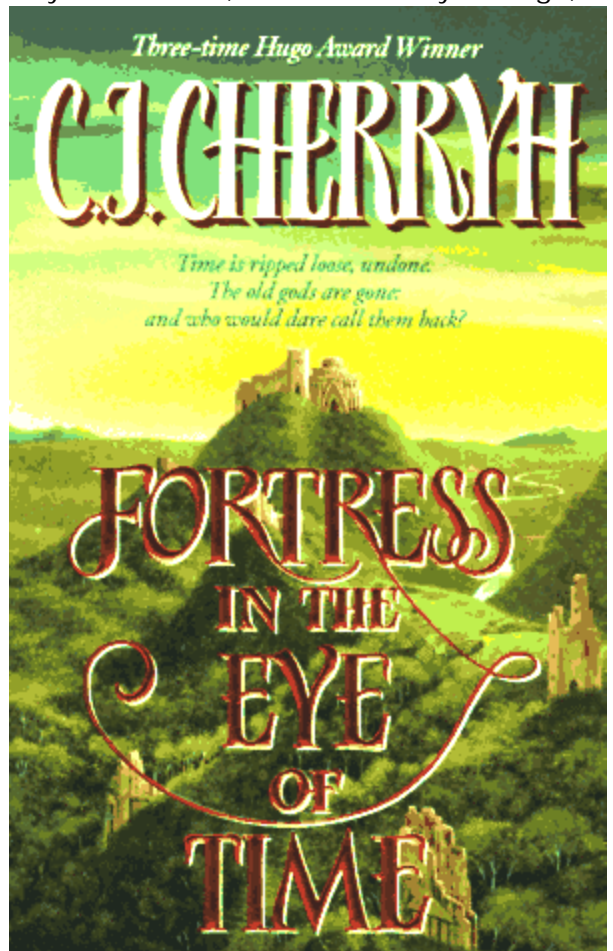
The first book, Fortress is the Eye of Time, sets up the world and the characters and the story. Is Tristen, harmless, the result of a failed act of magic? The heir to Mauryl's wizardry and magic? The reincarnation of the last Sihhe king, an atonement for that betrayal? Or something else? Something dangerous? The second book, Fortress of Eagles, finds the surviving characters deep in intrigue and conspiracy. It mainly exists as a bridge to the third book. The third book, Fortress of Owls, finds more intrigue, and more action. Tristen blossoms here as a decisive and forceful character.

These books compose one of the best, the most flawless fantasies produced. Its very hard to praise perfection. I start listing other stories and their flaws to show what mistakes could have been made and weren't. The language is great, the details of daily life and action is great, the characters are great, the point of views are great. The whole thing is great.

One of the hallmarks of a very good SF or Fantasy novel is to create believable worlds. Worlds in which you wonder about the history, the future, the characters, and the economy. C.J. Cherryh does this perfectly. She always has created complete worlds, but this is a particular wonderful example.

Her characters do not merely live in a forest, they live in a forest of Oak and Ash. The Fortress has rickety stairs and wooden balconies and uneven floors.

Another citadel, the Zeide has stone floors, some of polished marble, and some of rough flagstones. The roads do not merely traverse the countryside, they pass through fields and walls and wind along hills and pastures and into green forests. Emys village is most of a day's ride from the Zeide; horses and men are tired and slow and exhausted after riding there and back. The horses are not merely generic; the fantasy equivalent of cars or motorcycles, but characters in their own right. There is bay Petely, common bred, strong and enduring but neither beautiful nor fast. Red Gery, smooth gaited, cooperative and brave, who is exhausted after a long ride and a hard fight. Danwys, a dark



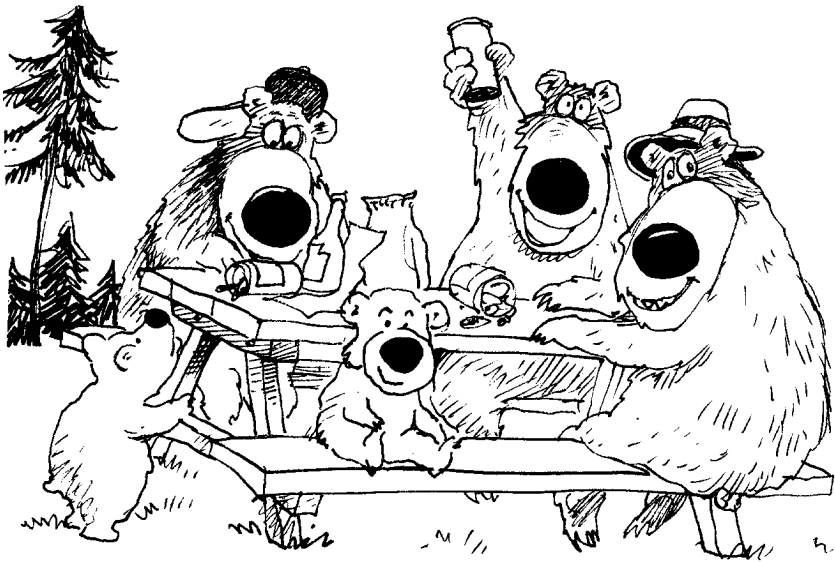
bay, the Prince's pet. Dysarys, with feet like platters, and a nervous disposition. These horses come with their own quirks and needs. In the second book, Petely endures a long hard tiring ride from morning to evening; but is still strong enough to speed up when he knows his stable is near, and stubborn enough to try to bolt uphill through the town to get in.

The people are real. The main characters are distinct and different and not stereotypes acting out preordained actions. There are some nameless, interchangeable spear carriers; but even many of the bit characters are named and described. Aswys, a horse trainer; Andas Andas'son, a standard bearer; Syllan and Aren, men of the Prince's guard; and many others. Prince Cefwyn does not call on nameless and indistinct lords for an army; but on Cevulirm, gray and grim; and Umanon, smallish and stout. Like real people, the characters in the story grow and change and act upon each other. Tristen starts out totally ignorant, and by the end of the third book is raising armies. Most of these people are nice, not perfect but nice. Stories are more enjoyable when the characters DON'T need to be thrown into the river.

I had to buy a new copy of Fortress in the Eye of Time: I had sent my previous copy to a friend as being far, far too addicting to keep around. A new copy was well worth the money, I read and reread and reread all three books. I've wallowed in these books for the past couple month, ignoring lesser books in their favor. They create an entirely believable world.

WSFA Picnic Michael Nelson

You are invited to join your fellow WSFAans on July 17th for a picnic in Bill Mayhew's backyard. Directions to Bill's home in Beltsville, Maryland (11411 Cedar Lane) and other information will be published in the July *WSFA Journal* and on the WSFA web site (www.wsfa.org).



WSFA shall be providing hot dogs, soft drinks, and beer.

Please contact Michael Nelson at michaelnel@aol.com to RSVP and to sign up for which items you will be bringing to the picnic. We are asking everyone to bring supplies or food for six or more people or to make a \$5 contribution.

It's important to let me know if you will be attending so we can properly coordinate this

event. I would hate for us to end up with 200 pounds of pasta salad and no marshmallows or even more horrible -- to run out of beer! With that in mind, please let me know what beverages you would prefer (e.g., regular or diet soft drinks, beer, water, juices, etc.) as well.

We'll need things like charcoal (and charcoal lighter fluid), hot dog rolls, u/m/b/r/e/l/l/a/s, side dishes, plates, cups, napkins, utensils, condiments, munchies (e.g., potato chips), hamburgers and other dead animal flesh, desserts, etc. I should be

attending the next few WSFA meetings to talk about the status of our picnic arrangements.

WSFA Defeats the Phantom Menace

By Samuel Lubell

Lee Gilliland had arranged for WSFA to see *The Phantom Menace* at a theatre near their house. So I drove to Virginia allowing enough time to get lost, but found the place easily due to the excellent directions. Alexis handed out tickets and the WSFAns ran into the theatre. To our surprise, considering that this much-anticipated film had just opened three days ago and this was a Saturday night there were plenty of seats in the theatre. In fact the room still about a quarter empty when the film started, even with the thirty-odd WSFAns present.

The film opened with the familiar 3d scroll of text setting forth the basic situation (already violating one rule of drama by telling instead of showing.) The Jedi ambassadors fought off armies of robots, sneaked onto the planet, and met a native of that planet named Ja-Ja Binks. That's where the movie started to go wrong. There were only two possible reasons for the inclusion of this character 1) To have a cute alien they could make into toys and 2) So that the kid Anakin Skywalker would not be the most annoying character in the movie. Basically this character does everything wrong that is possible to do without being evil. He is stupid, clumsy, and a coward. This isn't comic relief, it is uncomic annoyance.

Then the Jedi are chased to Skywalker's home planet. They need parts for their ship. The senior Jedi goes looking and the owner of the first store he walks into says he has the parts and is the only one on the planet who would have them (but he's immune to Jedi mind control.) So do the Jedi check to see if any other stores on the planet might also have the parts, send a message to their home base, or even see if the Jedi mind control works on *anyone* else who might own something they could use to trade for the parts? No. Instead the main Jedi gambles his ship on the ability of 8 year old kid, who has never won a race and is using a vehicle the kid built himself.

At that point, the film froze and then a bright spot appeared in the screen growing bigger. The film had started to melt. Eventually the club had an unexpected ten minute intermission, but everyone was given a free pass to see any other film in the theatre. We used the time to dissect the film. Joe summed it up by calling it "A Saturday morning kid's show made with real money."

Eventually the film started up again, minus a snippet. The race scene was fun, although the computer graphics there looked designed for a computer game. The scenes with Darth Maul and his double-bladed light saber also were exciting. But I could have done without the kid saving everyone **twice** in the same movie (and worse, the second time mostly by luck.) Still the computer graphics were nice.

After the show a bunch of WSFAns went to a nearby sports bar to eat and talk. Thanks to Alexis and Lee for arranging this fun evening.

Computer Sex

A pastor of one church who was previously a sailor, was very aware that ships are addressed as "she" and "her," He often wondered what gender computers should be addressed. To answer that question, he set up two groups of computer experts. The first was comprised of women, and the second of men.

Each group was asked to recommend whether computers should be referred to as male or female. They were asked to give four reasons for their recommendation.

The group of women reported that the computers should be referred to as male because:

1. In order to get their attention, you have to turn them on.
2. They have a lot of data but are still clueless.
3. They are supposed to help you solve problems but half the time **they** are the problem.

4. As soon as you commit to one, you realize that, if you had waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

The men, on the other hand, concluded that computers should be referred as female because

1. No one but the Creator understands their internal logic.
2. The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else.
3. Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval.
4. As soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.