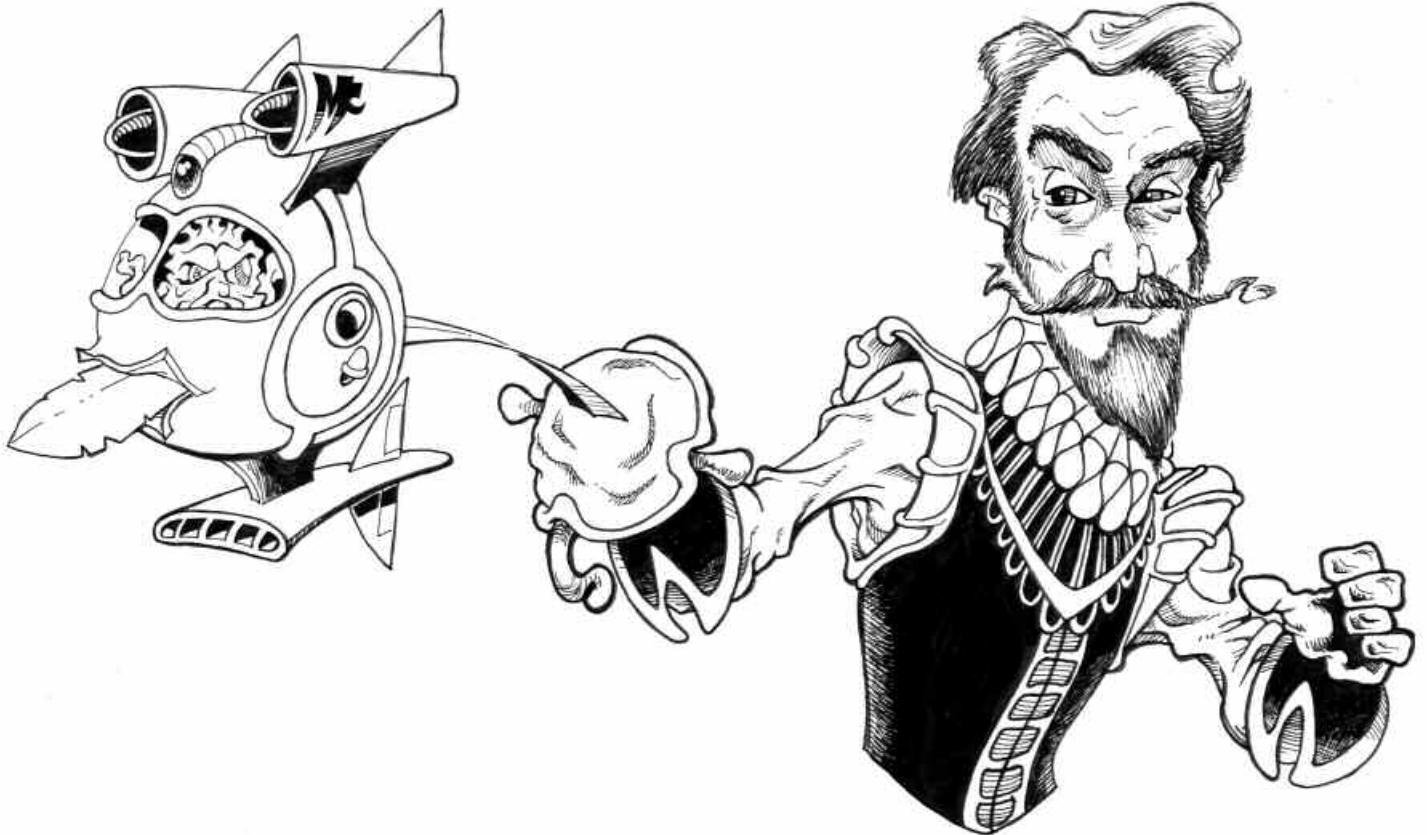


The collected stories, sketches and scribblings as originally presented in

# Sir Walter's SALON

A wholly original and goode production of the bless'd Raleigh NASFic 2010 Bid as performed most nobly and seemly ne'er in jest by the Ark Royal Players and encompassing a glorious 36 pages, as sanctioned and commissioned by Her Most Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth.

All Hail Good Queen Bess!



Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618) is best remembered as an explorer, soldier, and courtier.

He was, however, also a writer and poet. His books covered a wide range of subjects including travel, history, commerce, and government. One book, *The Discovery of Guiana*, tells of a South American city of gold and is thought to have contributed much to the legend of El Dorado. His poetry has been regarded amongst the finest of the Elizabethan poets.

It is to Sir Walter that we dedicate this fanzine...

## Life

What is our life? A play of passion,  
Our mirth the music of division,  
Our mother's wombs the tiring-houses be,  
Where we are dressed for this short comedy.  
Heaven the judicious sharp spectator is,  
That sits and marks still who doth act amiss.  
Our graves that hide us from the setting sun  
Are like drawn curtains when the play is done.  
Thus march we, playing, to our latest rest,  
Only we die in earnest, that's no jest.

—Sir Walter Raleigh



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**Edited and Designed by**  
Michael D. Pederson

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# A LETTER

*Wherein the architects of the bid are introduced*

Way back at Smofcon in Columbus (December 2008, for all of you non-SMOFs), there was a mention of the bidzine from the Big D in '73 bid. And with so many fanzine types on our bid committee (responsible for such zines as the *Southern Fandom Confederation Bulletin*, *Drink Tank*, and *Nth Degree* to name just a few), it only seemed natural that we could do something like that, too. So we put out a bunch of feelers and requests for contributions, and very quickly, we had enough submissions to put together a good zine. We settled on the title *Sir Walter's Salon* after reading about how Sir Walter Raleigh and Edmund Spenser used to be neighbors in Ireland, where they would pass material back and forth between them. This gave us the idea of creating a fanzine using all sorts of material—articles, fiction, poetry, art, and whatever else we came up with.

Our staff has been wonderful. Providing us with photos and illustrations, poems and articles. We've also been fortunate enough to receive some stellar material from Friends of the Bid as well. Mike McLaughlin sent us an incredible illustration for the cover. Laura Haywood-Cory of Baen Books supplied us with an amazing article on North Carolina's history and attractions. Rich Dengrove put together a fascinating article on Otway Burns, the Tarheel Pirate. Davey Beauchamp (writer, editor, and friend from too many conventions to mention) wrote an original Mister Adventure story for us. Long-time zine supporter C.J. Henderson gave us a new Pelgimby Institute story. And we were even able to persuade Sir Walter to donate a couple of poems!

So here it is, after months of languishing on our hard drives, just in time for the vote at Worldcon. It'll be up on efanazines.com in short order, and we'll have a few hard copies floating around at our tables and parties, too. And they won't go away if we win—it's fun stuff, and we'd like to give it as much exposure as we reasonably can. We'll do our best to get the *Salon* to as many cons as we can in the next year.

So here you have it: *Sir Walter's Salon*, a fanzine in support of the Raleigh in 2010 NASFiC bid.

—Warren Buff & Michael D. Pederson, Co-Chairs

**RALEIGH**  
**N****ASFiC**  
**2010**

# THE SECRET OF NASFiC

by Alexis Gilliland

What the NASFiC is, is a big North American Science Fiction Convention which is (usually) held within two weeks of the World Science Fiction Convention when the Worldcon has moved off the continent of North America. The location for the NASFiC is decided by vote one year in advance.

A long time ago, at a Worldcon, or maybe a Corflu, I asked Bruce Peltz why we had these things anyway, and Bruce, who had had a lot to do with setting the NASFiC up said that it was basically fan-political. Specifically, for the Worldcon to go global, bids from England and Australia and similar far-away places had to be approved at a North American Worldcon (Winnipeg if not Boston, Toronto if not Chicago, Montreal if not Los Angeles) and the sheer weight of numbers (all those U.S. fans voting) suggested that the odds would be stacked against the overseas bids. Therefore, as compensation for sharing the Worldcon with the rest of the world, NASFiC, the Worldcon's ugly stepsister, was created so that American fandom (a) wouldn't be totally bereft of the Worldcon experience, and (b) would therefore be more amenable to voting for places like Zagreb, Yugoslavia. Well, okay, Zagreb didn't get it, even with two tries and a civil war to make it a household name, but since we are coming up on NASFiC #10, it may be that the Worldcon has been sufficiently liberated from the grip of U.S. fandom to be what its name suggests, a World Science Fiction Convention. Which Bruce Peltz thought was a good and noble idea, and well worth the aggravation of a NASFiC to make it possible.

Which brings us to 2010. Worldcon will be held in Melbourne, Australia over Labor Day weekend (September 2–6). Therefore, if all goes well, the tenth North American Science Fiction Convention will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina.



# RALEIGH IS MY HOME

by Warren Buff

There's a certain difficulty involved in explaining objectively why a city I've known and loved my entire life is great. It's usually enough, for my own satisfaction, to know that it is home. But over the years, I've picked up a general experience of it, and watched it grow and change, so I've also got an idea of where everything interesting is, and I'll try to convey a little of that.

Raleigh is the City of Oaks, an honorific that rings true even in the midst of downtown. Four squares are still fairly green, two of which contain the State Capitol and the Governor's Mansion, the other two of which are public parks. Great oak trees grow on all four. Raleigh was a planned capital, like Washington, D.C., and most of the original streets follow the same paths to this day. The Sheraton and Marriott are both on Fayetteville Street, one of the four central streets of the city's original plan. Fayetteville Street was a pedestrian street mall until just recently, and its reopening has resulted in a surge of new businesses along it, including many restaurants and bars. Gazing down Fayetteville Street, you can see the Capitol and its grounds. The state legislature no longer meets inside, having moved to a much larger building a block further. That block contains two of the best museums in town—the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science and the North Carolina Museum of History. The Museum of Natural Science is particularly noteworthy, as it has the most complete specimen of *Acrocanthosaurus*—a big predatory dinosaur they call “the Terror of the South.” If museums are your thing, or if you've got kids, you might want to check out Marbles, the children's museum, over at Moore Square (one of the four aforementioned green squares). You might also catch a bus there (Moore Square is the bus terminal for the city's CAT line) and head over to the NC Museum of Art. We regularly have good exhibits there, and the permanent collection keeps getting better, too.



In addition to bordering on the bus station and Marbles, Moore Square features the giant acorn, which we drop each New Year's Eve. Several good restaurants border Moore Square, or are in the City Market, which forms a third side of Moore Square, including Tír Na Nóg, Rum Runners, Woody's, and El Rodeo. Heading back up Martin Street towards Fayetteville Street, you can stop by the Mecca, one of the oldest restaurants in town. They're great for lunch or dinner, and brunch on the weekends. If you're looking for pub fare, and a great beer list, check out the Oxford on Fayetteville Street. My pick for the best Chinese in downtown would be Five Star, tucked away on Hargett Street, near the railroad tracks. After dinner, it turns into one of the better clubs downtown, too. Five Star has the distinction of being the only place to get me through the door on the strength of their advertising alone—they had just the right self-deprecating sense of humor to draw me in. I could go on about places to eat all day, so I'll leave it at that, and let others fill in behind me later.

Back on Fayetteville Street, you can find the Raleigh City Museum. This is the only place in town that I've found the city's flag—unusual in that it's a double-sided flag, bearing the city seal on one side and part of Sir Walter Raleigh's coat of arms on the other. The City Museum features exhibits on the civil rights struggle,

Raleigh's two biggest championship sports teams (NC State's basketball program and the Carolina Hurricanes), and an exhibit created by students of my eighth grade history teacher on the last days of the American Civil War. Union cavalry chased the city's defenders out to Morrisville, near the present-day RDU airport. The city and state governments formally surrendered to Sherman, sparing Raleigh from the fate of the other Southern capitals. In fact, the Union generals had to turn their artillery on their own men to prevent any retribution following Lincoln's assassination. It is due to this action that much of the old city remains intact, including the Capitol, the governor's mansion, and several of the old neighborhoods downtown.

At night, there are several places to go looking for the nightlife. Glenwood South features a long row of trendy bars and restaurants which have grown up in recent years, and a little further into town you can find the Warehouse District, a place dominated by nightclubs. Moore Square, City Market, and Fayetteville Street all maintain a more relaxed atmosphere while having plenty to do, and if you're looking for something classy, just south of the end of Fayetteville Street, the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts is home to four different auditoriums—for everything from the North Carolina Symphony to theatre to opera.

But most of all, I think what's attracted folks to Raleigh in my lifetime is that it's a very friendly place; just big enough to have the nightlife, eateries, and museums of a proper city, yet still small enough to be laid-back and fairly wooded. The only other city I've visited which had quite the same feel to it was Wellington, New Zealand. There's a certain glory to the hustle and bustle of something as large as New York or London, and a real sense of history in a place like Rome or Philadelphia, but few places which are large enough to feel metropolitan can quite retain the charm of a smaller city. It's that delicate balance that makes Raleigh the kind of place I want to keep calling home.



# NORTH CARO-WHAT'S-IT? RALEIGH WHO?

by *Laura Haywood-Cory*

You're being asked to vote on whether you think the city of Raleigh, North Carolina, should host the NASFiC in 2010. You may not know much about North Carolina and Raleigh and the fannish communities here; this article is a brief introduction to our state and the fans who populate it.

If people outside the South (and some inside of it) have heard of North Carolina and can distinguish us from our neighbor to the South, it's usually for one of two things: NASCAR or tobacco. Or these days, maybe for the Carolina Panthers.

But there's more to the Old North State than stock cars and cigarettes. We're also famous for being Tar Heels, due, perhaps to the original North Carolina export, which wasn't tobacco, but rather pine tar. In the colonial period, tar was still an important sealant for wooden sailing ships; a good source of it was pine trees, and we have an abundance of those here.

Some legends say the Tar Heel nickname was bestowed on Revolutionary War troops from our fair state; other legends shift it to the Civil War and a troop of Confederate soldiers from NC. In most iterations, a high-ranking military officer commends the soldiers for standing their ground in battle, making a comment about how they stood as if they had tar stuck to their heels. In less flattering versions, one regiment warns another that they'll have their heels tarred so they won't run away from the next fight.

Though the Tar Heel nickname has more commonly come to mean specifically alumni or friends of UNC-Chapel Hill, it originally referred to anyone from North Carolina.

Raleigh, our capital city, is named for Sir Walter Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth's intrepid explorer who twice sailed across the Atlantic in search of El Dorado (we won't talk about the bad end he came to at the hands of King James).

His attempt to colonize the Virginia/North Carolina area led to the mystery of The Lost Colony of Roanoke—settlers, including husbands and wives, were dropped off, given provisions, a fort was built, even a child was born, the first English child born in North America—Virginia Dare. The ship that took the colonists to the New World was called back to England and upon returning a couple of years later, found no trace of the colony, except for the word “Croatoan” carved into a tree. If you go to the Outer Banks today, you can still see a production of playwright Paul Green's “The Lost Colony,” which is the longest-running outdoor theater production in the United States.

Speaking of the Outer Banks, the Cape Hatteras lighthouse is the tallest brick lighthouse in the U.S. and is perhaps one of the most iconic lighthouse images in the country, with its alternating diagonal black and white stripes. The stretch of shoreline that it protects is known as “The Graveyard of the Atlantic” because the collision of the cold waters of the Labrador Current and the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, plus shifting underwater sand bars, create extreme navigational hazards—many hundreds of ships have been lost along the Outer Banks since 1526. German U-boats sank nearly 100 more in a two-year stretch during the second World War, giving the area a second grim nickname: Torpedo Junction. Some of these old shipwrecks can be

seen from the beaches of the Outer Banks, particularly at low tide.

Staying with a nautical theme, Blackbeard the pirate made his headquarters on the North Carolina coast, even receiving an official pardon from the state's governor at the time, Charles Eden. Rumors persisted that Eden was under Blackbeard's thumb, that long before the pardon was issued, the governor was protecting the pirate, in exchange for a share of treasure.

This arrangement rather offended our neighbor to the north, in the person of Virginia Governor Alexander Spotswood, who, even though he had no authority to do so, sent down Lieutenant Robert Maynard to eliminate the problem. A fierce battle ensued, but in the end, Maynard and his men prevailed, and Blackbeard was beheaded. Nasty things, pirates, but they've been romanticized through the years, and recently, Blackbeard's main ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, has been found. Several of her cannon have been raised from the sea floor and are being restored.

When I was a kid, our license plates said "First in Freedom," because there was a Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence signed on May 20, 1775, a full year and more before the nation's Declaration of Independence—alas, we don't have an original copy, so that eventually had to come off. In fact, the state flag still bears the date "May 20, 1775," in honor of what Charlotteans fondly refer to as the "Meck Deck." No one's quite sure why we don't have an original copy of this important document, leading some to doubt its existence.

**What kind of fans are we? All kinds. We're bookish fans.  
Gamers. Media fans. Costumers. Anime fans. Fanzine fans.  
Fannish fans.**

Now our plates say "First in Flight," because of the Wright Brothers and their historic flight at Kitty Hawk in 1903, but even so, we've been locked in a dispute with the state of Ohio over who actually "owns" the Wright Brothers. And see, we're back to the Outer Banks again. I promise, other parts of the state are important, too. Read on.

The first gold rush in the country wasn't in California, wasn't in Alaska—it was right here in North Carolina in the early 1800s, in the middle part of the state, what we call the Piedmont. It's why there used to be a branch of the U.S. Mint in Charlotte (which is now the Mint Museum), to deal with the large quantity of gold that was being dug up. Many neighborhoods in north Charlotte are scattered with abandoned mine shafts, and the Reed Gold Mine is about a 45-minute drive from uptown.

If gold's not your thing but precious gems are, then head for the hills. Up in the Appalachian (and please, it's pronounced App-uh-LATCH-an, not App-uh-LAITCH-an) mountains, which are one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world, the town of Franklin is our gem mining capital. For several decades starting in the 1850s, two companies mined the area for commercial-grade rubies and sapphires. When synthetics became cheaper than the real thing, the bottom fell out of the commercial mines, but luckily the locals stepped in, and now folks can drive up to places like the Sheffield Mine and pan for their own jewelry-quality rubies and sapphires, one bucket of dirt at a time.

Stay here long enough and you'll inevitably get drawn into a barbecue war, unless you're vegetarian or vegan. We have two distinct styles, eastern and western. In North Carolina, the word "barbecue" means slow-cooked pig—not beef, not chicken—slathered in one of two sauces (we won't talk about that weird South

Carolina mustard thing): Eastern-style bbq is characterized by a vinegar-based pepper sauce applied with a light hand to fine-chopped whole hog; Western-style bbq is a tomato-based sauce slathered all over pork shoulder only. Both are served with cole slaw and hushpuppies. People have come to blows over which style is better. Me, I grew up in central NC and I like both.

That might be enough geography and history for now.

What else can I tell you about us?

How about fannishness? How fannish are we? I'm sure others will be going into this as well, so I'll just give you the very brief highlights. We have several solid fan-run conventions here. Stellarcon, in the High Point/Greensboro area, is the longest-running one, going on its 33rd year here in 2009. For nine years, Trinoc-coN was based in the Raleigh-Durham area. ConCarolinas, in Charlotte, is eight years old this year.

These cons are supported by several area fannish groups; in the Triangle there's the Research Triangle SF Society; Stellarcon is supported by SF Cubed, etc. ConCarolinas will be hosting the 2010 DeepSouthCon, which StellarCon hosted in 2008 and Trinoc-coN hosted in 2006. For more info on these groups, you can find them online here:

Stellarcon: <http://www.stellarcon.org/home>

SFCubed: <http://www.uncg.edu/student.groups/sf3/>

RTSFS: <http://www.rtsfs.com/> or <http://community.livejournal.com/rtsfs/>

ConCarolinas: <http://www.concarolinas.org/>

What kind of fans are we? All kinds. We're bookish fans. Gamers. Media fans. Costumers. Anime fans. Fanzine fans. Fannish fans. And yes, we know where we came from. We know who Claude Degler was. We get the Jophan Family Reunion joke. We may not all of us know how to use a Gestetner machine or know the joys of mimeo-ing a zine late at night; on the other hand, we use Facebook and LiveJournal and IM and the web and email.

Several sf, fantasy and horror authors of note live in NC, including William Barton, Orson Scott Card, David Drake, John Kessel, Mark Van Name, Allen Wold, and many others.

We are a state rich in natural and sfnal resources, and we look forward to sharing them with you.

Thank you for your time and attention, and, we hope, your vote.



# OTWAY BURNS, THE TARHEEL PIRATE

by Richard Dengrove

Warren called for articles for this zine to attract you to a North Carolina NASFiC. How about pirates? Will that attract you? Specifically, one pirate, Otway Burns, the Tarheel Pirate. How would I know about Tarheel pirates? I come from New Jersey. I am, I guess, a Joiseyite. That's a long way from North Carolina. Well, as a kid I went to summer camp one year, and one of the counselors was a Tarheel. One night he told the camp a ghost story about Otway Burns. I packed that away in my already overpacked brain; and, when Warren sent out the call, I had a Tarheel subject at my disposal.

In regards to being a pirate, Otway would have resented the label. It was the War of 1812, and he had a Letter of Marque from the federal government allowing his vessel, the *Snap Dragon*, to prey on British ships. Thus, he considered himself a legal pirate, a privateer. However, others considered him as much of a pirate as Captain Kidd. When he tried to recruit crew members in New Bern, NC, a lawyer, Francis Martin, called him a "licensed robber." Burns rowed ashore and threw him into the Neuse River. Other political leaders loaned new recruits money, and then promptly had them arrested and thrown into debtors prisoner. Debt, at the time, being an imprisonable offense.

In a way, those who called Otway a pirate won. Rarely do you hear him referred to as a privateer. However, these days a pirate is considered romantic while a privateer is dullsville.

What is annoying about the web accounts of Burns' piracy I consulted is that much is made of the most mundane and boring facts. Much is made that, before the war—financed by the planter, politician and physician, Edward Pasteur—he had captained a coastal trader. And much is made that, as a pirate, he continued to be financed by Pasteur. Much is also made of the names of the other investors, and the price and dimensions of the *Snap Dragon*. Even Otway's pirating career is rendered as the most mundane facts. For instance, one author summarized that career as a take of 300 sailors, 42 ships and \$4 million.

I could only find one decent account among this bland roll call of facts and figures. But even then the writer failed us at crucial points. In St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, the *Snap Dragon* ran into five British man o' wars. Burns tried to pass them unprovoked by disguising the *Snap Dragon* as a merchant ship: he had ragged sails rigged and the guns moved out of sight. Nonetheless, one ship fired a warning shot that it wanted to board her. Now, that's excitement! Then the writer gyps us. He merely states that Burns led the *Snap Dragon* out of danger. How?! Then the writer goes on to mention that, after that harrowing episode, Burns found himself at Ship Rock Passage, which was blocked by two British brigs. Yes! More excitement! But the writer lets us down again: he simply states that Burns got away.

When Burns returned to North Carolina from privateering in 1815 (and here the mundane tendency of the web authors to state facts rather than relate any action holds them in better stead) he became a businessman. It helped that he had money from pillaging British ships. What also helped was his pirate daring. Of course, as a lifelong seaman, he bought and built boats. In addition, he bought a taproom, a partnership in a company selling salt, a brick kiln, and a 240-acre plantation. Perhaps his most daring achievement was building the *Prometheus* in 1818. What made it so daring was that it was the first steamship in North Carolina.

Burns had it ply the Cape Fear River between Wilmington and Smithville (now Southport).

Of course, what made all these enterprises really daring was, in addition to being financed by pirate booty, they were financed by lots and lots of debt. In fact, Otway was head over heels in debt. Thus, when the Depression of the 1830s came and he couldn't pay his loans, he was completely wiped out.

Otway had another career, as well, one very appropriate for a pirate: he became a politician. He served seven terms in the North Carolina House of Commons and four in the State Senate. He was daring there too—and far more cosmopolitan than his constituents. In a state that was rock hard pro-slavery he worked to allow free blacks to enter the state and to improve their lot. Also, although he represented the eastern region of North Carolina, he supported measures to help the western region. Thus, in the 1830s, as well as going bankrupt, he was voted out of office.

However, he retained some political clout. He was able to secure a job as lighthouse keeper of the Brant Island Shoal Light Boat near Portsmouth Island.

The next big incident in Burns' life happened in 1850: he died. However, death doesn't end our account of Otway Burns, the Tarheel Pirate. I can't say it was continued by the ghost story my counselor told me. Not only have I been unable to find that ghost story; I have been unable to find any about Otway. You could say he was totally ghostless. I suspect that my counselor made it up on the spot. His legacy is more than a lost ghost story however, the North Carolina towns of Burnsville and Otway were both named for him.

Nonetheless, in a way, he still remained a pirate even in death. A cannon (purported to be from the *Snap Dragon*) was placed on his grave. What better token of piracy than that?

#### SOURCES

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2. <http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/188/entry>
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The second is more clearly written than the first. The third shows Otway's grave.

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3. Lindley S. Butler. *Pirates, Privateers, and Rebel Raiders of the Carolina Coast*. University of North Carolina Press, 2000. A search on "Ship Rock Passage" in Google will get you a passage on Burns from this book.
4. Ruth P. Barbour. *Cruise of the Snap Dragon*. Winston Salem, N.C.: J. F. Blair, 1976. This is fiction but it is supposed to be very historically accurate.

*Whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade;  
whosoever commands the trade of the world, commands  
the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself.*

– Sir Walter Raleigh

# THE FIVE STAGES OF CONRUNNING\*

by James and Tera Fulbright (with apologies to Larry Miller)

## Level 1

It's Friday afternoon at a con. You've just arrived. You look at the program to see what to do when one of your friends says, "Hey, can you watch the registration table for a few minutes?" One of your ConRUNNING friends. Here at Level One, you think to yourself, "Oh come on, it can't be that hard. As long as I get to tonight's GOH panel (snaps fingers), I'm cool."

## Level 2

It's Friday Night. You've been at the Reg Desk for the last eight hours. You just spent 20 minutes arguing against ever running a con. You get up to leave again but at Level Two, the GOH passes you on the way to a party, and asks if you can run out and buy some Sharpies. And you think, "Hey, I'm out with friends. I like helping folks. These are the good times, besides if I get to the next GOH panel (snaps fingers), I'm cool."

## Level 3

Saturday afternoon—you're now Director of Reg. You've missed the GOH panel—twice. You just spent 20 minutes arguing for running cons and now you're thinking, "The Media GOH is the most interesting person I've ever met." At Level Three, you can do anything. On the way to get a nap, you buy some books from the guy at the last table in the dealers' room, just because you like his face. You get conrunning fantasies: *Like, hey guys, if we run our own con, we could pick the guests! We could do it. Regina—you could run the Green Room!* But at Level Three the GOH is back at registration—and he's telling con stories. And you're thinking, "Oh, come on, I can do this. As long as I see the costume contest, and get a shower (snaps fingers), I'm cool."

## Level 4

Saturday night. And the GOH is dealing cards on the bar. For the costume contest, you entered with a pillow and a bathrobe! You ARE the con manager. This time on the way to bed, you call security on the guy from the last table in the dealers' room, just because you don't like his face. And now you're thinking, "The Media GOH is the dumbest person I've ever met." You and your friends decide you can run the con by yourselves... right after everyone else has gone to sleep. And you actually think to yourself, "Well, as long as I'm doing all the work, I may as well RUN THE CON! Yeah, that'd be good for me, I don't mind going to the Dead



Dog looking like Jack Sparrow, even though I'm not in costume. Yeah, I'll turn that around, make it work for me. And besides, as long as I get 31 hours of sleep tomorrow... cool."

### Level 5

The Dead Dog Party. After trying unsuccessfully to get your soul back, ("But I didn't even plan to volunteer!") you and your friends find yourselves in the back room with SMOFs... planning a WORLDCON. It's the kind of moment that even the GOH says, "Uh, I gotta turn in, I've gotta be at the airport... at nine. I've got that meeting with my editor. I can't miss that." At this point, you're all drinking some kind of thick blue liquor, like something from a Klingon wedding. A volunteer comes over and you think, "Someday, she'll run this con." A friend stands up and screams, "We're driving to Boskone!" And passes out. You stagger outside for air and then you hit the worst part of Level Five. The sun. You weren't expecting that, were you? You never do. You walk out of the hotel into daylight, and you see people on their way to work, or jogging. And they look at you—and they know. Let's be honest, if you're 19 and you run a con, it's like a victory, like you've survived the weekend, but if you're over 30, then that sun is like God's flashlight. We all say the same prayer then, "I swear, I will never run another con (how long?) AS LONG AS I LIVE!" And some of us have that little addition, "and this time, I mean it!"

\*Based on "The Five Stages of Drinking" by Larry Miller  
<http://www.larrymillerhumor.com>

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A  
DRUNKEN CON COM?  
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A  
DRUNKEN CON COM?  
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A  
DRUNKEN CONCOM EARLY IN  
THE MORNING?  
MAKE 'EM BID FOR NASTIC  
TILL THEY'S SOBER!  
MAKE 'EM BID FOR NASTIC  
etc ad naus.

bb



# A LIGHT THAT SHAMED THE SUN

by C.J. Henderson

“I mean it, goddamnit... where in hell’s my flying car, anyway?”

It was that particular moment in the outburst that got through to the heavy-set individual with the curly hair and sweetly vacant disposition. A round-faced man, he was, one as large of frame as he was of heart. He had, at the moment of disturbance, been pondering the problem of cross-wiring fate with exactitude, as a cure for menopause, no less, when the shouting gentleman at the other end of the counter there in the Cold Crab Cafe interrupted his mental gymnastics.

Of course, jumping back just a moment before said eruption, merely for a chance to analyze his mental project, one might decide that such a presumptuous experiment would not only be beyond the grasp of mankind’s current collective of thinkers, but also that the very imagining of its possibility should be considered grounds for involuntary commitment to the nearest competent couch jockey or licensed state institution. Such would be perfectly reasonable, and anyone would be excused for thinking that it would constitute a proper course of action—anyone that is, who was not familiar with that singularly remarkable cooperative...

“I mean, I’m sixty years old, and I’m tellin’ ya...”

That most charmingly whimsical of scholarly business concerns...

“I remember...”

That most unbelievably fantastic hotbed of intellectual mayhem and scientific hooliganism...

“Back in the day...”

The Pelgibly Center for the Advanced Sciences, complete with the wonderfully unique brand of inquiring minds which staffed its halls so completely. They were, as its brochures promised, titans of research, giftedly tremendous brains, the kind of venerable cranium-stuffing that routinely conquered multiverses, rolled consistent D20s and made uniquely damn fine cups of amaretto cocoa. Minds like that of Dr. Aristotle T. Jones.

“Every time you turned around...”

Holder of 25,603 personal patents, deviser of the bundled dimensions theorem, and universally applauded creator of the thirty-second flavor...

“Someone was sayin’ it was just a matter of time before we were all gonna be hikin’ it around in flyin’ cars like the freakin’ Jetsons.”

And the perfect rung on the evolutionary ladder if ever there was one to bring mankind such a boon, if indeed, there was any hairless ape capable enough to do such a thing in all the known stretches of research and development. For this discussion, it is important to remember that Aristotle Jones was not an inventor’s inventor, not in his heart. No, the soul of his tinkerer’s happiness was enriched by the cobbling together of

things that, in the classic sense of the phrase;

*Benefitted Mankind.*

The thing-a-ma-bobs and wozzling-do-giggies that he created were universally loved by all peoples. The grand majority of the world, of course, had no idea that every day when they gave silent gratitude to this or that convenience, conveyance or cocktail, that it could be counted on that the designs, theories and random cosmic hiccups of Dr. Aristotle T. Jones could be found frolicking there somewhere in the background. Dr. Jones simply adored creating things which made people go “ahhhhhhh,” and he spent as much time as he possibly could out in the real world, searching for ways to hear that sound, accompanied by the indescribable joy of seeing their faces light up in a smile that shamed the sun.

Which is why, at 11:30 in the A.M., on a perfectly reasonable and altogether ordinary Wednesday, he was situated on a stool at the counter in a perfectly reasonable and ordinary Baltimore-style crab diner several blocks from the fabled Pelgimbly facilities, rather than hard at work in his lab.

Impossible as it was for many of his colleagues to comprehend, Dr. Jones found the vast majority of his inspirations, not surrounded by test tubes, refractors and pestles, but from within the drama, torment and comedy of the realities created by ordinary people. It was the needs and fears of the common man which drove his intellectual curiosity, and now that he had heard this phrase, this practically tortured wondering over why our physical world was not the one predicted in the 1950s, suddenly his own intellectual curiosity over the matter was reborn anew.

And so, having been snagged from his own churning cauldron of thought by this random query, having fallen far enough into at least a slice of the world’s actual reality to be able to interface with a fellow human being, if only for a moment, his mind caught by a sudden gust of white-hot curiosity, Dr. Jones solicited a proposal.

“Tell me, my good man,” he asked politely, if somewhat absently, “what exactly would you do with a flying car if indeed it were possible for you to have one?”

The man snapped back the standard nugget one might expect from someone whom, on a daily basis, could be counted on to slap their fists against crumb and crab juice-spattered counters, spewing their words over perfectly decent people as if those poor souls did not have enough morons yammering at them throughout their day already without the addition of yet another slack-jaw into their lives who was neither their employer or a minion of the legal professions.

“Hey, whatd’ya expect?” The man fixed the doctor with a belligerent stare, then dropped the other shoe, “I’d freakin’ fly it.”

And, for some reason which flickered in the subconscious of Aristotle T. Jones at that particular alignment of the planets, the doctor joined with the man at the counter in feeling the over-riding need for that question to finally be answered. For, once he had calculated the number of times a particular age-group had made that same impassioned query, he realized Destiny was practically screaming out for some research to be done. And also, suddenly remembering that his All-Round-Researcher’s license would soon require him to log some additional flight time anyway, he nodded his head in the grumbling man’s direction and answered;

“Well then, Mister...?”

“Terill, Harry Terill...”

“Well then, Mr. Terill, let’s go get you one, shall we?”

“So, okay Doc,” the growling man said to Jones, “explain again why we’re powering up a blimp?”

“Zeppelin, actually,” the doctor absently corrected. “It’s quite simple, really. You see, travel between dimensions is possible only in lighter-than-air ships.”

The man stared at Jones as if he had announced he was about to pull an African elephant from his back pocket. Having spent most of his life being stared at in such a manner, the good doctor, of course, failed to take note of his travelling companion’s confusion. Unfettered by such mundane embarrassments, in a moment he related how Dr. Wendel Q. Wezleski had discovered the way to move sideways through reality. The good doctor had, of course, learned how to move forward and backward through commonly shared reality earlier on—“time travel,” he had called it. But, the vastly more tricky, and extremely delicate operation which Wezleski had been attempting to learn while constantly, albeit accidentally, inventing new ways to shatter the chronos barrier was the movement through parallel dimensions.

“You see,” Dr. Jones told the excitable counter-slammer sitting next to him in the airship, “to effect a journey through dimensions takes steam power. It’s the only sufficient energy source we have that doesn’t depend on any sort of delicate electronics. Electronics in operation keep the sideways gates from opening, don’t you see? So, once our steam-powered generators have gotten a doorway opened, then we still have to depend on lighter-than-air travel for the same reason—only such vessels can be navigated without the aid of electronic devices. Once safely through a gate, of course, additional power sources can be brought on line, but until then...”

“Yeah, yeah, I dig it,” Terill interrupted. “But how does this get me a flyin’ car?”

“Well, simply put,” answered Jones, his attention split between his easily distracted charge and maintaining his white-knuckled grip on his seat—maintained so because the good professor had an absolute and overwhelming dread of air travel, “we have targeted the nearest possible dimensions which show as likely for having based their major modes of transportation on something other than automobiles.”

As soon as Dr. Wezleski had opened the passageways to inter-dimensional exploration, every government in the world had, as one might expect, expressed their typical, extreme disapproval. The Americans, with characteristic disdain for their own interests when faced with stern frowns from their current friends, such as France and China, or their traditional friends, such as Japan and Germany, responded by clamping firmly down upon Pelgimbly, installing their own military people to monitor even the most minute movements within the Institute being made outside of agreed-upon-reality.

Now to be fair, in the favor of the current regime, they had not been so utterly disapproving at first. But, after the mighty thinkers in Hollywood quickly rallied public sentiment along the same lines as the rest of the world with such blathering drivel as *10 Million Dimensions to Earth*, *I was a Teenage Zep Jockey* and *The Next Dimension Needs Women*, the government became far more nervous about allowing research to continue unfettered by their “expert” supervision. The scientific community, as one might imagine, rallied behind Pelgimbly for the obvious reasons, but the films had been released within months of a major election, and that was all there was to say about that.

On the other hand, of course, a chore as simple as sliding 598 feet of helium-filled, steam-driven steel and plasti-canvas past the keen and watchful eyes of military intelligence is not all that great a problem for the typical Pelgimblian. Within minutes of Dr. Jones’ assistant, the twenty-two year old ginger-haired Adora Feldstein, wandering “accidentally” into the Prime Security Chamber with a plate of fresh brownies, and a carafe of ice-cooled milk, all monitor screens covering the launch bays became temporarily unmanned and the mighty air-

ship, *The Thomas Alva* was able to slide gracefully through the electro-flux barrier between unreality and possibility off to the first target dimension, some one thousand, eight hundred and forty-seven realms over.

“What do you mean, ‘nearest possible dimensions?’”

“Ah, you see,” explained Jones, stuffing the bowl of his pipe, “there are an infinite number of dimensions parallel to our own. If we were to simply travel to the nearest one, we would find things to be, well... almost exactly the same as in our own. No flying cars to be found there. Oh, my—no. But...”

Jones paused to set the flame of his lighter to his pipe. Torching the mix within its bowl, he continued, spitting his words out in small bunches in between puffs.

“If we hop outward into the sideways void... then our chances of finding an Earth... where the average motorist has left the ground behind... well then... there we might indeed discover what you’re looking for.”

Terill nodded, actually comprehending what he had been told. He made a few further inquiries, several even bordering on the intelligent. Jones puffed on his pipe, watching the screen in front of him, answering Terill’s questions and advising the pilot on likely short-cuts until finally, an announcement from the navigator’s chair told them they had arrived at candidate dimension number one.

“We’re here!”

“Well,” corrected Jones, knowing which “here” Terill meant and how likely he was to be accurate in his assessment, “we’re ‘somewhere’ at any rate.”

Racing to an observation port, Terill began to scan the airways, his eyes craning in all possible directions, searching for the winged, four-on-the-floor of his dreams. His search went on, sadly, unrewarded. Whether high or low, East or West, back, forth, or any other direction available for scrutiny, Harry Terill spotted many a plane, several helicopters, and a few points of light which he thought might have been UFOs, but he could lay his eyes on nothing that appeared to be a flying car in any reasonable way, shape or form.

“I don’t get it,” he said finally. “I thought this dimension was guaranteed far enough away to be different from ours.”

“Indeed it is,” Jones told him honestly. “Perhaps an excursion to the surface will tell us something further.”

It only took a matter of a few moments for the professor to calibrate the proper charge to resonate his body and his guest’s so they could wander about on the surface of the world below them. Leaving the *Thomas Alva* uncharged, of course, so that it might remain invisible to the locals, they then descended to the ground outside the nearest town and hiked into the suburbs.

“You know, I don’t think I remember seein’ any roads from up above,” Terill announced as they accomplished their first quarter mile.

“I wouldn’t think we would find any anywhere in this world,” responded Jones. Releasing a great billow from his pipe, he mused, “That was the whole reason for sliding this far over, dimensionally speaking.”

“But,” asked Terill, “if they don’t have flyin’ cars, or roads for regular cars, then how do they get around?”

Eighteen more steps gave them the answer. Coming to a break in the wooded area into which they had descended, they suddenly came to a row of suburban-style apartment buildings. Rounding the corner of the closest, they emerged into the open to find something the good doctor had not anticipated.

“My, my, would you look at that now.”

“The goddamned sidewalk is movin’.”

As the two explorers watched in rapt fascination, people mounted and dismounted the conveyors stretched out before them. Many merely stood while they were propelled along, reading newspapers or listening to this or that being piped through headphones, but far more seemed quite comfortably at rest atop small, one-legged chairs upon which they remained stably poised by using both of their legs for counterbalance. Two belts moving in opposite directions were needed to keep things flowing, and people had to step across several moving belts to continue onward when one set of belts crossed another, but they seemed to do so with relative ease.

“Jeez’it, Doc, how do they do that?”

“How do they do what?”

“Get across the lanes so quick?” Terill stared in awe-struck wonder at the sight of a woman in her early sixties along with her dachshund as they skipped nimbly across the five feet of a belt headed west, then an identical set of feet found on the one next to it headed east, finally catching up to their own belt, still headed south, which had traveled underneath the other two.

“I would surmise it was simply a matter of growing up with it,” Jones conjectured. “After all, think about it for a moment. If we were to take them home and show them people weaving five-ton automobiles through traffic, bicycles and pedestrians, I’m certain they’d be just as impressed with any of us as you seem to be with them.”

“Makes sense, I guess,” Terill admitted. “Makes me wonder how they move packages, groceries, you know—furniture, bigger loads. Is this all they have—these movin’ sidewalks? How does really big stuff get around? And what do they do when it rains? Or in the winter time? Or...”

Deciding he would like to know such things himself, Professor Jones moved them forward until they intercepted the older woman and her dog at the front door of her building. Claiming to be doing a survey, they asked their questions and discovered that everything they wanted to know had the most mundane of answers. People simply took carts and wheeled baskets and all manner of dollies, et cetera, with them when they shopped. Delivery trucks in Dimension Starboard/1847 were merely platforms on wheels, most of them a type of remarkable automated platform that delivered packages to destinations then returned to their point of origin as programmed. Bad weather was apparently compensated for with protective clothing. And so on and so forth.

The Travolator, which the woman announced as the name of not only the beltway in front of her apartment building, but the entire world-wide system, worked quite nicely at all times and in all manner of weather, and she would not dream of supporting a measure to introduce some other form of transportation. Smiling broadly, Jones thanked the woman for her time. Terill kicked a rock in angry frustration. Both returned to the *Thomas Alva*.

“That was sure a bust,” announced Terill, still kicking things as they re-entered the zeppelin.

“Well, think nothing of it,” answered Jones, settling into his chair for another stomach-turning launching forward. “We’ve got an infinite number of possibilities before us.”

“Yeah,” grumbled Terill, “an infinite number more of possible disappointments.”

Dr. Jones allowed the remark to pass, thinking he would soon be able to snicker kindly in his guest’s direction as they sailed into the proper reality. But, it soon became apparent he had been wise to allow the remark to pass for a dimension where they actually had flying cars was rapidly looking to be as rare as garlic wedding

cakes or ethical standards in the music business. Not that the pair of explorers did not find alternative modes of transportation.

Oh, no indeed.

The *Thomas Alva* sailed into a plethora of alternate realities where men had found a wide variety of innovative means of locomotion. Their very next stop brought them to an Earth where the pogo stick, of all things, had become the major means of personal transport. When they ventured into the nearest city, they witnessed not only a rush hour madness of literally thousands of pogoing white collar workers springing their way home, but styles and varieties of pogo apparatti never dreamed of back home. They saw two-person models, ornate chauffeured versions, high-roaring, souped up models moving in packs which clearly seemed to be piloted by spring-powered gangs, and even massive, multi-pronged mass transportation based on pogo technology.

It was, to say the least, a disheartening stop, but the pair slogged on, plowing through the ether and moving on to one dimension after the next, hurrying to one more additional, equally disheartening stop after another. Future visits brought a gaggle of Earths which had made strange variations to the automobile, but which had not abandoned it completely. Others dealt with technology familiar to the travelers, but which they had never seen used to such all-encompassing ends.

They discovered worlds where cars ran on nuclear fuel, massive heavily shielded roadsters with the looks of tanks, but with unlimited mileage and the added side ability to glow in the dark. They also discovered the amphicar, a kind of three-masted convertible which navigated equally well on roads or that Earth's extensive canal system, as well as the three-wheeled Dymaxion, a marvel of grace and imagination which embodied for transportation the same principles of economic form and functionality that the geodesic dome brought to architecture or the Rob Roy brought to hangovers.

They found worlds where the pneumatic train had conquered all, exotic, yet Victorian-styled lands where the gravitational pendulum was master, rushing rounded train cars from California to New York at speeds of five hundred miles an hour. It was an inspiring sight for Jones, who found the air-driven, environmentally-friendly trains a wonder, and who would have made more notes to see if such a system could be implemented back home if not for the fact the trains filled the air with the sound of booming mechanical flatulence with grinding monotony.

Worlds which depended on the hydrofoil and the hovercraft also seemed around every corner, as did ones where people rolled along sitting in the center of giant wheels, ran along within over-sized plastic bubbles and even a few where the use of animals for moving from place to place had not fallen from popularity. And, this was not just the familiar horse and oxen, but everything from the camel and dog sled to the kangaroo and the giant sea turtle.

This was not to say that other Earths with flying citizens were nowhere to be found at all. The intrepid explorers discovered dimensions where the skies were filled with manned platforms which flew on giant fans, amazing discs steered by the simple action of the pilot leaning to one side or the other. They also stumbled across such often dreamed of wonders as rocket belts, jet packs and one interesting dimension where, instead of wearing their engines, its aeronauts stepped onto a platform that housed a vertically oriented turbojet and then launched themselves off to work, the movies or the nearest McDonald's at mach seven.

There were also plenty of sites where mankind had decided personal transportation could be accomplished en masse with helicopters, tilt-o-rotors and gyroplanes. The doctor and his guest even, eventually, found one odd society where those with the itch to leave home and go further than the nearest corner did indeed do so in Aerocars. These were intrepid Studebaker-like devices which cruised the roads quite nicely, but which could

be driven into a set of wings that came with its own extension, tail and rudder. These attachment pieces locked into place in moments, allowing the driver to then fly off quite easily into the wild, blue turnpike. Most people did not seem to possess their own extensions, but merely picked one up at a kind of U-Haul service located at the nearest airport.

Still, as close as this was to their desired goal, the Aerocar was as much what they were looking for as a pumpkin was a pumpkin pie. Disheartened, as blue and lost and as thoroughly depressed as he ever had been in all his cynical, noisy life, a tired and woefully worn Harry Terill said;

“Maybe we should just pack it in, Doc.”

Jones looked up from his speculation charts, his eyes taking in all of his guest’s horribly forlorned expression. The abject defeat on the man’s face stung the doctor. This was not a person about to say “ahhhhhhhh-hh.” His were not eyes destined to shine with a light that could shame the sun any time soon. No, this was a man defeated—one suffering from a let-down as severe as the eight-track tape and as devastating as the two-party system.

Indeed, his discouragement seemed as complete as possible. Far more than just Terill’s eyes were woeful, his entire posture was cheerless, his stance that of a banana on a hot day. His teeth appeared melancholy; his fingers dismal and somber. It was not a pleasant picture. Aristotle Jones pursed his lips, trying to think of something encouraging to say, but he could find nothing.

How could he?

After all, they had uncovered civilizations which had tried to gift their citizens with the flying car, but they had all come to ruin. Ordinary folks, it seemed, were simply incapable of handling the extraordinary demands of the fighter jet, which essentially was what the flying car would be, especially when coupled with the notion of travelling in proximity with their fellow excursionists. Most people, as could be attested to by the ever-increasing accident statistics to be found anywhere human beings could also be found, were simply not team players. They did not like to give way to their fellow drivers. They did not particularly enjoy even having to consider that there was anyone else on the road other than themselves.

Worlds which had adopted the flying car sat in burning ruin, millions of sleek, aerodynamic carcasses littering their landscapes, the trapped and broken remains of the socially just-not-good-enough moldering behind their ruptured steering mechanisms. Taking a long drag from his pipe, Dr. Jones rolled an orange-wood scented waffle of smoke around in his mouth, then let it out slowly, saying;

“I have one more thing I’d like to try, if you don’t mind, Mr. Terill. Why don’t you lie down and take another nap. If this next trip doesn’t fix things, we’ll give it up. What do you say?”

Tired, but still stubborn enough to remain hopeful, Terill headed for the cot he and the doctor had alternated using throughout their long and frustrating journey. Jones waited for the older man to fall asleep, then signalled the pilot to head for home. It seemed at that point that there was only one way remaining to grant Mr. Terill his wish.

Luckily for him Dr. Aristotle Jones was humanitarian enough to employ it.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Terill first felt the gentle tugging at his shoulder, his mind had brought him to the conclusion that his entire time with Jones aboard the *Thomas Alva* had been but a nightmare of sorts, a bad stretch of REM sleep

brought about by some rarebit he could not quite recall. When he opened his eyes, however, he found the good doctor there before him, but with something oddly different about him. Jones was smiling.

No—not smiling.

No, not smiling at all. Jones was ebullient, positively beaming, as happy a man as Terill had ever seen in his six decades on the planet. Sitting up, he rubbed his eyes, questioning what seemed to be the obvious mainly out of self-preservation, like an orphan refusing to believe in Santa Claus, or a New York voter, suspicious of a voting booth.

“You tryin’ to tell me somethin’, Doc?”

“Step outside, Mr. Terill, just this one last time,” answered Jones. “And see for yourself.”

Excitement raced the older man’s blood and he headed for the ladder to the disembarking platform, each step coming faster than the one before it. Once to the ladder, he practically leaped from rung to rung, taking them two, three at a time. He hit the ground running, but came to a sudden, joyous stop as he saw where he was.

The *Thomas Alva* had stationed itself on a cliff overlooking a vast metropolis, one whose massive skyscrapers were a buzz with clouds of vehicles flying between them.

*Flying!*

“Hey, doc—*doc!*” he shouted. “You did it, man; you did it!”

And, indeed, it seemed that Dr. Aristotle T. Jones had done just that, for before and above and all around them, the world was awash in flying cars. The landscape below them was clean and bright and nifty enough to have been clipped from the front cover of a 1954 edition of *Popular Mechanics*. Terill staggered wildly, twisting and turning with excitement youthful enough to make him appear drunk as his body tried to show him everything possible within the same moment.

Everywhere was a glory of sky-splitting craft. Brightly colored, practically noiseless, emitting no soot or clouds, they were graceful as hawks in flight, the traffic patterns achieved things of art to behold.

“Oh, my God, Doc,” whispered Terill, “we did it; we *did* it.”

“Well,” corrected Jones, “We found it, anyway.”

“No,” answered a still completely fascinated Terill, “*We* did it. ‘We,’ ‘us,’ mankind. We got ‘em up there. When we saw all those other worlds, man, where everything just kept crashin’ and burnin’, where men just couldn’t get it together enough for us to work together, to fly and soar and zoom, together—I mean, it was killin’ me.” Turning to face Jones, the older man told him;

“Back in the fifties, everyone thought the future was gonna be filled with wonders, and in a way, I guess it is, but they never turn out. They’re always bitin’ us on the ass. Nuclear power, and clonin’, steroids, air conditionin’, even diet soda... nothin’ ever does what it was supposed to. Nothin’ ever comes through. There’s always some hidden price tag...”

Jones watched as Terill turned once more to staring into the sky. The man seemed renewed, freshly born, filled with a wonder and joy the doctor could scarcely measure. Then, shifting his view through his bifocals, Jones checked his virtual view of Terill against the actual person stretched out on the padded slab before him. Terill appeared basically comfortable, all his bodily signs stable. Reaching out, Jones made a minor adjustment to the older man’s headset, making certain it was securely intact.



# EL DORADO

## A MISTER ADVENTURE AND SOLOMON STONE ADVENTURE

by Davey Beauchamp

In another place and another time, seven men of a single mind gathered to discuss what few options they had left open to them. They were now the last of their kind. These seven had been hunted across time, space and dimensions to the brink of extinction. In days past these men were a mighty guild of explorers. Now they were a linchpin to something more. These men now had to turn to a hero who could save them from a fate far greater than death. If these seven could not be saved, it could end existence for all living things; tearing the fabric of all reality asunder and unleashing things which only resided in the imaginations of men.

“We have found him!” he exclaimed in a thick British accent with a squeak to his voice.

“Where!?!” This new voice sounded quite similar to the first, but with a slightly different pitch and tone. If one hadn’t been paying any attention one would believe they came from the same source.

“Dimension 32A-Earth 567,” and again the voice was so similar to the other two. One would swear they could have come from the same man, but that was far from the case.

“Well than I guess it is—”

All seven men now spoken in unison, “—time to initiate transdimensional jump!” It was now seven voices all the same with only minute differences in each, but each was filled with a passion all their own. “TRANS-MOG-RO-PHY!”

A flash of brilliant rainbow-ringed white light exploded in the darkened room, illuminating the seven men, each wearing a chrome-visored helmeted uniform, each in a different color: Black, White, Red, Gold, Green, Silver, Purple. Then the seven men faded into the light.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mister Adventure was leaping from rooftop to rooftop just enjoying the day. It was moments like this that he was glad Alexander Venture had become Mister Adventure, hero of the city of tomorrow, *today*; Sapphire City! And dealing with the insanity of the masked villains, evil master minds, Nazis, and monsters was totally worth it.

The flash of light caught Mister Adventure’s attention as he turned his body from being upside down in his latest running jump flip. It was quickly followed by a pulse of sound, knocking Mister Adventure from his intended target of the next rooftop. For any other mystery man this might have sent them into a panic, but not Mister Adventure. This was par for the course and part of the fun for him.

A smile crossed his face.

He reached out with a hand and grabbed a flag post. Adventure used the momentum of the fall to swing himself around the flag post and back up high into the air. He quickly landed on a nearby ledge of the Perez building. Without missing a beat he leapt from the ledge towards another rooftop in the direction of the explosion and the Museum of the Unknown. Adventure wondered what sort of trouble Solomon had gotten himself into this time.

Doctor Solomon Stone had been doing nothing special or interesting, just perusing the exhibits of the Museum of the Unknown. It was one of two museums he was the curator for in Sapphire City. Both museums were his babies, but this one was the most fun, because it let him explore the stranger and more enigmatic mysteries of the world. Things the academic world was still not willing to accept.

He was looking over an exhibit on the legendary city of El Dorado. The glass case contained a golden block, which supposedly came from the legendary City of Gold. Solomon had discovered the block on one of his trips to South America, following a hand-written journal of Sir Walter Raleigh to Lake Parime and beyond. It was still a mystery whether Raleigh had ever found the city himself or not. It had been a treacherous journey filled with countless head hunters, wild animals and traps to dissuade the cowardly. In the end only this single block of gold was found. Dr. Stone was amazed at how well preserved the block had been when he found it. His mind was once more filled with the adventures of its acquisition and a smile slowly crept to his face.

A bright light exploded forth from the darkness of a corner, blinding Solomon and engulfing the entire museum. An explosion of sound rivaling that of a volcano erupting sent Stone flying backwards into a wall covered by a medieval Scottish Tapestry depicting a Knight Templar at the battle of Bannockburn. Blackness overtook his conscious mind as the back of his head hit the wall. The tapestry fell down upon him.

The light faded and there stood the seven men.

“We have to hurry,” Red said, taking charge of the group.

The men spread out, searching for the object of their quest.

If one could see Silver’s face, one could have seen the frustration growing upon it, “Where could he be?”

Gold turned to the others, “Our readings told us he was here!”

“Not only that, we need to find the object as well,” Black said. “One without the other is useless to us.”

The doors of the exhibit room, where they were all gathered, burst open and standing there was Mister Adventure. “I am here and I don’t think Solomon Stone would take kindly to someone robbing his museum!”

“It’s him!” Green said in awe.

“But...” Red tried to say before Mister Adventure leapt into action, not wanting these strange men in colored costumes and helmets to outnumber him in a fight. Adventure didn’t recognize them and wasn’t about to let them get the drop on him.

It only took a matter of minutes for Mister Adventure to put these seven men in their place. They were all lying on the floor moaning in pain thanks to his patented one-two punch. Adventure almost felt sorry for the men. They were definitely not the fighters he believed them to be.

Then another moan caught our hero’s attention, one he knew all too well. Adventure walked over to the fallen tapestry and uncovered Solomon; still in the world of the unconscious.

“Look my fellow explorers—it is him,” Black said in excitement, slowly getting back to his feet. He had read about Mister Adventure and his one-two punch, but to experience it himself was amazing. “We now have a chance.”

Before anything else could be said, White hit a button on his time-space-displacement-armor-gauntlet of

transfiguring power. The mission was not going to be jeopardized by any more violence. They were explorers now, their days of soldiering long in the past.

A flash of black light, imploding in on itself, absorbed back the sound wave from earlier in a sensation not meant for the ears; taking back the energy from before. Once the normal spectrum of light returned; the seven men, Solomon Stone, and Mister Adventure had vanished; along with the block of gold from the City of Gold, El Dorado.

\* \* \* \* \*

Time, space and dimension folded in on themselves as they arrived at the Explorer's Museum of Quadrant A2G3H7. Solomon Stone and Mister Adventure had no idea which way was up when they arrived. The disorientation was the least of their problems, though they didn't know it yet. For the seven men a trip like this was a normal day at the office.

Mister Adventure rose to his feet, not happy in the least. He muttered to himself, "Well, I guess round two is about to begin," and began moving toward his abductors with a slight wobble in his walk.

"Wait, wait, wait," Black said running up to Mister Adventure to give him a hand, "We don't mean the two of you any harm." White went to help Solomon to his feet and over to a round table with ten high-backed chairs, each a specific color.

"We need your help," Red said in earnest, "if you are willing to give it."

"Breaking into the museum and kidnapping us isn't the best way to ask for our help," Mister Adventure said, annoyed, but he was always willing to help those in need even if their approach needed some work.

Solomon looked at Adventure. "What my colleague here is trying to say is that, all you had to do was ask and we would have been more than happy to help you in your time of need."

The remainder of the group walked over to the table and sat in their corresponding chairs. "We are sorry about our methods—and to be honest we weren't expecting to get you caught up in this matter, Mister Adventure. We only need Doctor Stone," Silver said throwing in his two cents, not wanting to be left out.

A voice exploded from the space above the center of the table. "Enough!" A beam of light followed, emitted from the center, encompassing half the table. The light travelled into the heavens, no, the universe above and kept going until the human eye could no longer see the end of it. The beam turned from a hot white glow into a dullish grey-blue. It gave the two new men sitting at the table a true perspective of the place they had been taken to.

The beam illuminated the room or the room illuminated the beam, but it appeared they were sitting in the middle of the universe. They two men were in awe and forgot about their predicament. It was breathtaking. The space beyond the table was filled with display cases bearing exotic artifacts from throughout time and the universe. The wonders they had collected went beyond even the farthest reaches of both Adventure's and Stone's imagination.

A set of eyes, a pointed beard thoroughly waxed into position, and flared mustache appeared in the illuminated light. "Time for drawn-out discussion and debate is not a luxury we have. Let me introduce myself gentlemen, I am SWRIMS, the guide to those who call this place home."

"What is this place?" Mister Adventure asked. "It is incredible."

The voice of the illuminated light agreed with Mister Adventure with a sound. “It is times like these that make people forget what is in front of them.”

Red cleared his throat knowing that it took only a moment of distraction or odd observation to cause SWRIMS to get off track.

“Yes, sorry then,” the voice said. “There are forces at work against us. You, Dr. Solomon Stone of the Museum of the Unknown, are the key to our salvation.”

Solomon took a moment and looked at the colorful set of men around the table and then back at the voice hiding within the beam of light. “If that is the case why did you also take the golden block of El Dorado? What else aren’t you telling us?” He had a hard time believing he was anyone’s salvation.

The voice laughed, intrigued by the intelligence of Dr. Stone. SWRIMS had heard that the doctor was a man of great intelligence and this just proved that notion correct. “To begin with, we must find common ground in which to navigate. And to do so we must reveal ourselves to you.”

The seven men removed their helmets and the voice in the beam of light faded into view. They all appeared to possess the same face with only minor differences. One had a scar above his right eye, while another had one above the left, and yet another one across the cheek. Their haircuts and beards were also all quite similar with only minor differences of flavor and style. If one did not look close enough one would assume they were all brothers. The face in the beam of iridescent light seemed to be the perfect version of what the men should have looked liked without the ravages of life and time. And, Adventure noticed, each bore a striking resemblance to his friend, Dr. Stone, as well as to a picture he had seen at the museum.

Solomon just looked at the men before him, trying to formulate what was going on here and he knew it was something on a grand scale of cosmic proportions. And he had to wonder if Dark Mask was involved at all.

“Okay,” Mister Adventure said nonchalantly, “so we have multiple Sir Walter Raleighs from alternate worlds banding together to face a multidimensional threat.”

They all stared at him with a dumbfounded look upon their faces, except of course Solomon. The two had shared many past adventures, which had taken them to alternate dark worlds, including one where Mister Adventure was an evil dictator—Dark Mask.

“And now back to my question,” Solomon Stone added, “why do you need me and the golden block of El Dorado?”

“The two of you are quite amazing individuals,” SWRIMS said, pleased that both of these men were brought with the key. But he was never given the chance to finish what he was about to say, as a tiny ball shot forth shattering the illuminating beam of light. SWRIMS vanished with the beam as the ball shot white light in all directions. Once it had accomplished its mission—putting an end to SWRIMS—it fell to the center of the table with a tink, tink, tink.

And where it came from caught all the men off guard. Red was standing up with an odd weapon in his hand. “Now, as much as I would have loved listening to a recap of what has been going on, SWRIMS had it right, time is not a luxury anyone has at the moment.” The gun was now pointed at Solomon Stone. “If the good doctor would join me over here next to the key—sorry, golden block—we can get this over with.”

Solomon gave Adventure a quick glance and a nod. They understood each other. This wasn’t the first time they had faced this sort of situation. Solomon did what he was told. Red took Stone’s hand and moved it across the block in a very odd pattern and once it was done, the two men vanished.

The six remaining Sir Walter Raleighs were stunned by this turn of events. They could never have imagined Red betraying them to the enemy. Mister Adventure was now ready to get down to business. He knew Solomon could take care of himself for a while, but he wasn't sure how much time they had to work with.

"Okay men," Adventure said trying to rally the explorers, "I need to know what is going on and I need the short version." He had dealt with Solomon and his lengthy explanations when a few short sentences could have summed it all up.

They were still in shock; all that they had known had just been shattered. A friend had betrayed them to the enemy.

"Come on," Adventure yelled at them.

*Nothing.*

"Time isn't a luxury we have and if we are going to save the day, I *need* to know what is going on," Adventure said looking at all of them and not getting a response, but not wanting to risk his friend's life. He slammed his fist on the table as hard as he could. A dent appeared in the metal. The sound snapped a few of the Sir Walters out of their comatose states.

"Yes, sorry," Purple said. "What do you know of El Dorado?"

"Just what I have seen in the exhibit Solomon created. So I know about it."

"Okay," Gold said, "let's move on then. What do you know about the city of Atlantis?"

"We don't have time to go through this 'What do I know' business," Mister Adventure said, trying to get to the point.

"The city of gold has been known by many names, one of them being Atlantis. The people who created Atlantis/El Dorado were an amazing people not from your world. Not from any world that we know of. They were dimensional travelers. And the city was their means of transportation through the barriers that exist between dimensions," Silver said coming out of his daze.

"The city had many powerful weapons aboard it. One you most likely know of from the legend of King Midas; his ability to turn things into gold was, in truth, an Atlantean weapon. Then, most recently..." Purple said before being cut off.

"Michael Aztek and that hand of his," Mister Adventure said, beginning to piece things together, "not only did it turn a part of us into golden statues; it sent us to another dimension. So I am guessing the big bad guys who are hunting you down want the city for themselves and all the weapons it possesses to conquer all things."

"That is, as you say, the gist of it all," Gold said with a hint of something more in his voice.

"What else is there?" Adventure said looking at all the men. It was eerie how similar, but different they all looked to one another.

None of the men wanted to answer the question.

It dawned on Mister Adventure, "So is the bad guy one of you, with a beard and mustache?"

There was a pause.

Mister Adventure just looked at them, "We don't have time for this. I need to know everything, before

things get any worse!”

Purple looked at the others and spoke up, “The enemy we face is to us what Dark Mask is to you.”

“So Solomon is having a meeting with himself,” Adventure said, wishing he was there when it happened, “but I can tell there is still something more.” No one spoke up, but it hit Adventure—a tidbit from Solomon’s lineage. “One of you is related to Solomon and another to the not-so-nice version of him. And I am guessing none of you know who it is on both counts. Otherwise there wouldn’t be seven of you still left alive. But why was my dimension’s Solomon needed?”

“It seems the city likes your dimension most of all,” Green said, “It is one of only three worlds in which it left a key to be found, along with the keys to unlocking its power.”

Adventure saw something in Green’s eyes, a sadness he would not let be heard in his voice. And on some level he understood what he meant. “What is the key?”

“On your world it was Solomon, laid in him by his ancestry to one of us,” White said.

“Okay,” Adventure said with a smile, “what if I told you there was another Stone who might fit the bill?”

\* \* \* \* \*

Solomon Stone hoped he knew what he was doing. Since waking up that morning he had been kidnapped twice, met a roomful of Sir Walter Raleighs (proving where he got his good looks from), seen El Dorado with his own eyes and discovered the true secret of the legendary city, and had come face-to-face with his own evil counterpart. It was like nothing he had imagined. His counterpart had given him the whole “Join me and rule the universes together speech,” which he turned down without a second thought. And now Solomon was sitting in a golden cell. Stone figured the only reason he was still alive was that his evil self still needed him for something.

\* \* \* \* \*

“What trouble has my brother gotten himself into this time?” Vickie asked with a smirk. She always loved it when she had to bail out Stone. Adventure quickly filled her in on what was going on. It all went over her head, but if Solomon needed her; she would be there for him. She was more of the “point her in the direction of the enemy and she will take care of them” sort. Vickie left the mystic scientific mumbo-jumbo to her brother.

\* \* \* \* \*

White, Gold, Green, Silver, and Purple along with Vickie and Mister Adventure were gathered around the golden block, while Black worked furiously to repair SWRIMS. The group of seven vanished as Vickie Stone touched the block in the same way Red had forced Solomon to.

There was a flash of light as the travelers began their journey to El Dorado. Their bodies’ transversed dimensions and they witnessed history of the past, present and future collide, but not necessarily those of their own world. It was beautiful and terrifying all in the same instant.

*A man of burning rock screams the pain of death...*

*Kid Adventure—no longer a kid, but a teen standing with a much older Dr. Richards...*

*The Adventure Family standing strong...*

*A statue of Mister Adventure holding the flag on a desolate plain...*

*The Nazis invading the United States and planting their flag on the White House Lawn...*

*A League of Adventurous Heroes with a team of all new faces and not a mask amongst them...*

A golden light flashed and the team of seven made it to the legendary city of gold. It took them all a moment to take in the scope and beauty of the city that was truly a dimensional warship.

“Wow,” Vickie said, amazed by it all. This was the first time she was happy that Solomon had needed her help, because otherwise she never would have seen this firsthand. And no amount of words could describe the experience.

“That is the understatement of the century,” White said in awe.

“Where do we go from here?” Adventure asked, wanting to make sure his friend was still in one piece and not a golden statue.

Gold looked around at the city, “I figure if the maps of Atlantis are correct, we need to move towards the center of the city to find the building that controls all of this.”

As they ran down the streets of Atlantis the hair on the back of both Vickie Stone’s and Mister Adventure’s necks stood on end. It felt like a trap to them. Every madman, despot, warlord, and even mad scientist they had ever faced always had a force of weak-willed men or monsters following them. They knew Red was working for him, but their gut told them there should be others. And the city itself, if it was the weapon they were told it was, should have weapons of its own to deploy against them.

\* \* \* \* \*

They quickly made it to the main building, surprisingly without any opposition and held their position on the outskirts of the building. Adventure and Vickie quickly scouted out the perimeter and regrouped with the Raleighs.

“I never thought I would say this, but the only way I saw to get into this place is through the front door,” Adventure said.

“Sounds like a plan to me,” Vickie said. “Plus, from what I can tell, there are no sentries. It is like the place is deserted.”

“But is a frontal assault a good idea?” Green asked.

“Totally,” Mister Adventure said with a smile, “we do it like this all the time.”

Vickie snickered, because Adventure was right.

\* \* \* \* \*

Solomon Stone’s counterpart was sitting upon a throne of gold waiting for the arrival of his guests. He had full control of the city, and well he knew about his expected visitors; their arrival might provide him with the pawns he needed to bend his captive to his will.

The doors to the central chamber opened with Adventure and Vickie taking lead, followed by their rain-

bow-colored crew. They were greeted by the evil Solomon upon his throne of gold—Red standing beside him, Solomon at gun point. “Welcome to my humble city. Do make yourselves comfortable,” the evil Solomon sneered at the gathered heroes.

Adventure and Vickie couldn't believe their eyes when they saw the evil Solomon for what he was, a child. It was all Vickie could do not to burst out in laughter, though a snicker did escape. “God, you sound just like him but as a child,” Vickie said between the giggles. “Solomon were you always this dry? Didn't you ever have any fun growing up?”

“Dear sister, I am British and that is what we do,” Solomon said, as proud as ever.

A warm amber light appeared on the time-space-displacement-armor-gauntlet of transfiguring power Purple was wearing. He had been afraid of this, but his gut had always warned him that it could still be a possibility.

“Who is this disrespectful woman?” the child said, still with dignified composure.

“Ah, that is right,” Solomon said with a grin, “you wouldn't know, would you? And I would have thought with everything you do know, you certainly would know about her. Maybe you aren't as clever as you thought you were.”

“Really, my dear doctor, I might not be your equal in age but my intellect outshines yours drastically,” the child said. “Of course I know who Victoria Stone is; Agent of the Americans, and nothing more than a byproduct of a tryst your father had with an American whore.”

Vickie went from laughter to rage. Mister Adventure grabbed her arm to stop her from doing anything stupid, because that would be exactly what he would have done himself. She shrugged him off and just stared at the child, who now had a grin on his face, knowing he had turned the tables on her.

“I am quite surprised any of you remaining explorers grew a backbone,” the child said, looking over his guests. “I figured Red here was the only one with the common sense to back a man of my intellect. I will, for a final time, offer you a place at my side. How many of you must die before you see the errors of your ways?”

Rage wasn't only building in Vickie, but Purple as well. He couldn't take it anymore. Purple pushed aside everyone, drawing what looked like a retrofitted space-flintlock pistol with a carbonized charge. “This ends now!”

A shot was fired, not from Purple or Red, but from the child upon the golden throne. He held in his hand a smoking luger with a smile across his face. But as quickly as the smile had appeared from killing yet another would-be-hero, pain appeared.

The luger fell from his hand, as his fingers began to vanish from history. It made no sense. Red was his ancestor. As long as he existed so did he. There was no way they could have tricked him. The child went to scream in defeat and pain, but his words fell silent, as time took them and him from ever existing.

But as the child faded away, an infinite number of men appeared bearing the same face, never having been killed by this child. The death of a single man brought back countless others. Purple had known what he was doing and was glad. He was every bit the hero Mister Adventure had been, who was his favorite of the dime heroes from the pulps of his youth and world.

SWRIMS appeared and thanked Solomon, Vickie and Mister Adventure for their help in stopping the child and saving the day. “We aren't the heroes of this day,” Adventure said. “It was that man there.”

They all looked upon the body of Purple with tear-filled eyes.

# A NIGHT'S PONDERING

by Kat Hibpsman

In glimmering twilight  
Drifting and dreaming  
Stars shining blue  
Through my partly closed eyes...

Taking leave to enter the hall  
What I find is not a wall  
But a vast emerald moor standing tall

Gliding to a waterfall, then to a stream  
A horned mare appears eating the green  
Shining abundant with a radiant gleam

Beneath a strong oak with leaves softly blowing  
Slumbers a child with warm spirit glowing  
Long snowy tresses wildly flowing

Eyes lifting open she smiles most gently  
Beckons to me and leads most contently

A swirling bright portal surrounded with vine  
Roses—no thorns—its treasures are mine

A voice without form at time's mystical breach  
"You are fore-sighted, much you will teach.  
Riches of the universe you alone can reach."

In my palm there forms a key  
A step through infinity awakens me

My chamber in focus, I sit with a start  
Place a hand to my fast-pounding heart

Curious the scent filling my nose  
On the pillow beside me...

A key and a rose.

# BAIRN'S POWER

*by Kat Hibpshman*

The menfolk were nettled in battle most fierce  
The women and wee ones left 'hind

The horned men were nearin'  
One wee mind did know  
And death was abidin' his time

He rallied the young ones while womenfolk weeped  
For the flames on yonder hill comin'

His soulfire grew and his whittlin' blade drew  
As he faded well into the shadow

The Norsemen they came, and the women were slain  
The small ones were hunted for naught

With wee blades and bows they gave giants their blows  
As deadly serpents beneath

The inferno's last call saw the last Viking fall  
And his lifesblood spilled over the land

So listen my friends with your hearts and your minds

Take care with a gentle wee soul

# A TRIFLE

*by Danny Birt*

Down South there's a city called Raleigh,  
the fandom of which is quite jolly.  
While WorldCon's away,  
all Raleigh will play—  
A NASFiC elsewhere would be folly!

# SONG OF MYSELF

by Sir Walter Raleigh

I was a Poet!  
But I did not know it,  
Neither did my Mother,  
Nor my Sister nor my Brother.  
The Rich were not aware of it;  
The Poor took no care of it.  
The Reverend Mr. Drewitt  
Never knew it.  
The High did not suspect it;  
The Low could not detect it.  
Aunt Sue  
Said it was obviously untrue.  
Uncle Ned  
Said I was off my head:  
(This from a Colonial  
Was really a good testimonial.)  
Still everybody seemed to think  
That genius owes a good deal to drink.  
So that is how  
I am not a poet now,  
And why  
My inspiration has run dry.  
It is no sort of use  
To cultivate the Muse  
If vulgar people  
Can't tell a village pump from a church steeple.  
I am merely apologizing  
For the lack of the surprising  
In what I write  
To-night.  
I am quite well-meaning,  
But a lot of things are always intervening  
Between  
What I mean  
And what it is said  
I had in my head.  
It is all very puzzling.  
Uncle Ned  
Says Poets need muzzling.  
He might  
Be right.  
Good-night!

# RALEIGH NASFiC 2010

*Announcing a  
bid for the  
tenth North  
American  
Science Fiction  
Convention!*

**Raleigh in 2010 is a Southern bid.** Our bid is made up of fans from across the South, from Texas to Virginia, with a core of North Carolinians. The idea started at the 2007 Deep South Con, and has been building momentum ever since. We'd like to extend some Southern hospitality to fandom by hosting y'all for the NASFiC.

**Raleigh is on the rise as a convention site.** With a brand-new convention center and attached hotel, and plenty more planned in the near future, downtown Raleigh is looking to expand its convention business. Here are some of the highlights:

- **Two centrally located hotels.** The Sheraton and the Marriott are about two hundred feet apart, with only one building in between.
- **A brand new convention center.** At the center of Raleigh's \$300 million downtown renovations is a 500,000 square foot convention center.
- **A massive selection of dining in easy walking distance.** Over thirty restaurants within a quarter mile, close to a hundred within a half mile, and fine dining in each of the hotels.
- **Convenient to the rest of the state.** Only four hours from both the Appalachians and the Outer Banks, Raleigh is an excellent springboard to scenic and historic vacation locales like the Biltmore Estate, Bennett Place, and the Wright Brothers Memorial.

*Raleigh in 2010      August 5-8, 2010*

*Sir Walter wants your Support!*

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The Southern Alliance of Fandom Enthusiasts (SAFE)  
12421 Hardee Rd.  
Raleigh, NC 27614, USA

[www.RaleighNASFiC2010.org](http://www.RaleighNASFiC2010.org)



# RALEIGH NASFiC 2010



*How to Support  
Raleigh in 2010*

**We would appreciate your Support and your vote for Raleigh to host the 2010 North American Science Fiction Convention.**

## **Here's how you can help:**

1. **By becoming a Pre-Supporter, Friend of the Bid, or Crew of the Ark Royal.** This not only gives us financial support, but helps us raise interest in the bid.
2. **By visiting our parties and bid tables...and by bringing a friend.** We're looking forward to hearing from you, and to spreading the word as far as we can.
3. **By checking out our website.** We'll be adding more information about Raleigh and about the bid as we go.
4. **By joining Anticipation, the 2009 Montreal Worldcon.** In order to vote for the location of the 2010 NASFiC, you'll need to be a member of the 2009 Worldcon. Check out their website at <http://www.anticipationsf.ca/>
5. **By voting in the NASFiC site selection at Anticipation.** Keep in mind that the NASFiC site selection is separate from the Worldcon site selection.

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