

The Devniad, Book 10

Bob Devney
25 Johnson Street, North Attleboro, MA 02760
508-699-7885
APA:NESFA #307, December 1995

APAholics Anonymous

**As APA's ninety-five winds down at last,
Let's retrospect some members of our cast.
To be absolutely sure no subject sues,
I'll thoroughly confuse the case with clues.**

**He talks of mothers grand and fathers fore;
Assiduously ups his Magic score.
With fifteen hundred pages to his name,
He's Aaron, Ruth, and Gehrig to this game.**

* * *

**With quips and quotes so constantly aflower,
This advocate spends every APA hour
Defending interplanetary law,
Arisia, and every show he ever saw.**

* * *

**Though sometimes penning notes on vac or con,
Reviewing keeps this book machine turned on.
When his report has -- quite concisely -- ended,
You've no doubt if the read is recommended.**

* * *

**Though others might let ills like his impair,
This trufan roams the starfields from his chair.
Trufen attract stalwart friends, and thus
He's got the Duke, Bogie and Coop -- and us.**

* * *

**Though once she reigned supreme as worldcon chair,
Now quiet life means Alex and her lair.
Perhaps she's shy to let whate'er she has go:
We still await her trip report from Glasgow.**

* * *

**Budapest, Atlanta, Scotland, Flushing:
He's played the trav'ling con game without blushing.
Now in a Magic game his way he's lost.
Another vic for Wizards of the Cost.**

* * *

**The club should have *some* social life; that's vital
Among advice to which he gives recital.
His chief improvement project is a whopper:
Ensure each bit Boskonian is proper.**

* * *

**When looking back, what stays in memory
Is envy of her trip to gay Pareae.
She dined full well, but shunned *objets immense*,
Including *La Grande Arche de la Defense*.**

* * *

**That cash and paper flow, not meet disaster
He slaves behind the scenes, this secret master.
His musings, like his latkes, uninflated.
He sees we're satisfactor'ly collated.**

* * *

**Though dishing dirt Arisian to start,
She afterward confined herself to art.
While all those Magic cards were pretty funny,
They couldn't beat her bold Bajoran Bunny.**

* * *

**Because his game is strong, his track is fast:
This year he's zoomed from fan to pro at last.
We know he won't forget us, him 'n Nom:
There's always be a page where we're at home.**

* * *

**When danger mounts, which isn't all that rare,
An issue might go out with wrapper bare,
She covers us. From these our quills,
We grateful lift our eyes up to her hills.**

**We write for us, for friends, for fun, for glory,
Although we know this fanworld's transitory.
And if you think this work a waste of time,
Just when were YOU immortalized in rhyme?**

Backchat
on last time's APA:NESFA
(# 306, November 1995)

To Joe Ross

Congrats on your anniversary! Interesting look last time at your first day in the legal beagle biz. Wonder why they didn't actually have you all repeat the oath for attorneys after the Justice. If you didn't actually say it, merely listened as it was read, does it have legal force?

Your report on alum F. Lee Bailey's speech to your law school reunion clearly violates the sanctity of the APA as virtually an O.J.-free space. But it was quite interesting, so we won't press prosecution.

Congratulations on being the only one in the audience during Q&A with the nerve to break the ice and ask the first question. I'll bet in a room full of reporters, there would have been no shy pause. I notice Bailey didn't answer the second part of your question, about whether his broadcast babbling might hurt his client in civil matters to come....

To Ray Bowie

Great news about no major medical miseries for a while. It must be like pounding your head against it rock: feels so fine when you stop.

Star Beast is quite a good Heinlein juvenile, very entertaining. Of those you've read, I'd put it behind *Citizen of the Galaxy* and *Have Space Suit Will Travel* and ahead of *The Rolling Stones*.

By the way, I've been recalling the theme song of the stylish Richard Boone 1950s TV Western *Have Gun Will Travel*. But I blank on a few words. Can you (or anyone listening -- how about you, Joe "Trivia Tsar" Ross) fill them in?

"'Have gun will travel' reads the card of a man/A knight without armor in a savage land/His fast gun for hire **dum dum dum dum dumm**/A soldier of fortune is the man called Paladin..." I'm thinking "reads the calling wind," but that doesn't seem quite right.

Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine and Edward D. Hoch both still alive? Wow. My favorites in *EQ* used to be the wonderful Michael Gilbert stories about Mr. Calder and Mr. Behrens, the middle-aged spies. Hope Gilbert is still alive and writing in Britain -- just yesterday I found a new (to me) book by him, an Inspector Petrella procedural (*Roller Coaster*) dated 1993.

Like you, I'm also a purist about black-and-white movies: down with colorizing!

No Dana Hersey, no *Movie Loft*, and Frank Avruch has retired? Didn't know. That's something I like about APA:NESFA: you learn something new every month.

To Mark Olson

Great to see you at *chez Hertel*. I've told your guillotine joke about the colonel, the priest, and the engineer several times since. Everyone who's ever been -- or even met -- an engineer likes it.

Agreed, that Bujold's Vorkosigan tales are immensely enjoyable. I don't think any of them has ever been the best book published in its year. (Take that, Hugo voters!) Not even close. But I don't sell her short. Despite her book covers and her space opera universe, she's got more going on than just a good light touch with military SF. In her August *Locus* interview, she talks a lot about the dynamics of character. I think that's her strength -- her people. Some of them, especially Miles, have considerable depth and richness. Many of their interactions are entertaining, witty, and felt to be true. That's tough to

pull off in even the most literary of SF books.

My trip to Britain is now looking more than a bit dicey, since my wife Maureen just got caught in a Motorola layoff. Unless I swim to London and sleep under bridges. As my sister Darcy would say, "Sigh."

I did get Darcy as a Christmas present an Oxford Guide to Literary Britain, which I believe you mentioned a few months back. Thanks for planting the idea.

To Tom Endrey

Sounds like you're going to Arisia -- how about Boskone? Maybe I'll get to meet you and put a face to the name at one or the other. If you stick your head out of the Magic room at the precise instant I tear myself away from a panel....

To Michael Burstein

Very nice to see you and Nomi at Hertel House.

You were self-deprecating that night about the quality of your trip report, so I expected it to be about one sentence long, something like: "We drove to philcon there were panels the blinkered bastards only put me on one but i enjoyed myself anyway i armwrestled joe mayhew for the title ubiquitous boy i would have won on word count but he cheated and did artwork too we broke scrapple with fellow clarionites we drove home."

Instead it was almost two pages, chatty and informative, gave me a sense of the convention. Thanks. Since I haven't been to a Philcon, if I had questions they would be "How does it compare to a Boskone or Arisia? What kind of different feeling does it offer?" And, since after all we're both SF fans and therefore need more than average

nutrient intake to feed our giant brains, "How was the food?" I lived outside Philadelphia (in West Chester) during my wonder years, ages 3 through 8. Scrapple remains one of my chief clear impressions.

Glad Gardner Dozois put you onto Cordwainer Smith. Always one of my favorites, and Dozois is right that a new writer with some of Smith's gifts would sweep the board. There's nobody I know in current SF who has a voice that distinctive. Or past SF either. I take it back: R.A. Lafferty. Still, Smith was marvelous. As I said during a Boskone neglected author panel on Smith a few years back, his crowning glory was his **names**. From Alpha Ralpa Boulevard (*pace* Tony Lewis) and Lord Jestocost and E-telekeli and the Instrumentality to the Underpeople and the Pinlighters and Helen America and Mr. Grey-no-more.

On the other hand, I read something by Jack Vance when I was about 11 years old, didn't care for it, never went back. It's occurred to me in recent years that the fault might just conceivably not have been Vance's. Are you enjoying your first Vance books? Any comments or recommendations?

To all

My sister Liz comments that I broke a writer's implicit contract with the reader by telling you all last time that Cassandra Boell had pointed out a fine Jane Chord specimen in Bugliosi's *Helter Skelter* -- a Chord which I then neglected to specify. Guilty. Truth was, I had forgotten the exact words by the time I sat down to write the piece, and couldn't lay my hands on the book to check. But I've since looked it up, and here's the nastily beating heart of Bugliosi's book about Charles Manson: "It...attacks."

Oh, and Chord hounds should check out the December issue of *Proper*

Boskonian for a new harvest of classic Chords in Joseph T. Major's letter.

To Tony Lewis

Grand to see you and Suford at the Hertel bash.

Last time was one of your most interesting genealogical essays, with the details on the local center, the stuff on transliteration traps in the Polish alphabet, a few neat *mots* ("There are no facts in genealogy, only documented opinions"), and your correction of a 159-year-old translingual typo. Spock would use his favorite F word.

About whether anyone at *Asimov's* or *F&SF* read your stuff before rejecting, seems to me I recently heard that one of the major mags will now only look at stuff that's been queried and approved in advance. However, I just spent a half-hour scanning recent issues of *Locus* and *SF Chronicle* for details, and can't find the item anywhere. So maybe I'm crazy.

Thanks for the reply to my query about Ben Bova. Sorry I missed him around the clubhouse in the glory days. So you're writing a book with him; what's he like as a collaborator? Any details you can let slip about the book?

To Jim Mann

Welcome to the APA! I'm new this year myself, but gather you've actually been around NESFA a long time, since I remember you on some interesting Boskone panels through the years.

About your title: "Along the Wabash, Number 1." Does this mean you'll be giving us more on Card's Alvin Maker background? If so, great; this one was excellent. Some comments:

C'mon. Why not break down and give us at least a few examples of how you think Card is drawing parallels to Mormonism? Pretty please?

The "Old Northwest" in the early 1800s -- seems like a fascinating place and period. A vast, almost untouched mystic territory. I remember thinking, "Of course!" when the first Alvin book came out and I realized what Card's setting was.

I'd never head of Simon Kenton, the buddy of Daniel Boone's whom you think is of equivalent stature, but I've since looked him up. You're right: very interesting guy. I like the part about how he first met the Indians as Simon Butler because he had killed a man in Virginia and fled westward under this assumed name. The good part is that years later he learned the man wasn't dead, and so took back the Kenton name. (I guess while homicide was pretty serious, assault charges didn't signify.)

How about giving dates of publication in your bibliography? Could help us gauge which source might have the latest research.