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Values

How To Not Spend Ten Thousand

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Email to WSFA

The Library of Congress Professional Association's What IF

The potential customer walked up to the register, book in hand.

"May I help you, sir?" inquired the sales associate.

"Yes. This book is labeled a 'Greentree Book.' What does that mean?"

"Greentree Books are designed for long lasting, environmentally safe use. They're specially manufactured for long shelf life, good quality reading, and ease of storage."

"Don't books pretty much last forever anyway?"

"No, sir. Many 20th Century books self-destruct due to acid in the paper."

"What about Gutenberg Bibles from the 1400's? They've lasted for 600 years."

"Older paper had a lower acid content than 20th Century paper. It's actually easier to find a 19th Century original book today than a mid-20th Century original."

"I didn't know that."

"Most people don't. So Greentree Books were created to prevent book self-destruction. The paper is specially formulated and manufactured, heavy duty, acid free superparchment. The inks are all organic mixtures that bond with the paper without destructive etching. The covers are real leather sewn together rather than glued. This book is guaranteed to last for 500 years, or your purchase price will be refunded upon presentation of the original sales slip."

"Well, that certainly seems to be very substantial. The potential customer paused. "But wait a minute. Frankly, some books aren't worth keeping forever. What if I want to recycle this book? A book so long lasting might be impossible to recycle."

"Oh, no, sir. The developers of Greentree Books thought of that, too. Although, naturally, we hope that you will enjoy this work for as long as you live and eventually pass it on to your heirs, Greentree Books are easy to recycle. Just soak the book in ammonia and the book will disintegrate in a week. Ammonia is available in common cleaning fluids but is seldom stored near one's library so it's extremely safe. The natural leather covers can be recycled in any organic landfill."

"Well, that certainly sounds very gentle on the earth. And Cathy Harney Early is my favorite author. I'll take it."

"Yes, sir. That will be eleven thousand nine hundred ninety-nine dollars and ninety five cents."

"Wow, I'm not sure that I have that much on me."

"The customer started checking his pockets.

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"Sir, we accept cash, checks with three forms of picture identification, travelers' cheques, and all major credit cards."

"I never carry plastic!"
form a committee to decide or we'd be giving it here and there and then it adds up to real money.” Alexis asked where the money is now. Bob said it is currently in WFC accounts. Alexis suggested waiting until the money is in WFC accounts before we decide. Lee S. said these were good points. We should wait and think this through. I'm not sure we need another committee; we have an executive board to debate it for a little while.

Eric moved to table it for a future meeting. Lee seconded. Rich asked about the contest budget for the year. Bob said $10,000 covers a year. John said, "This is not a one year deal, a lot of the other contributions are in-kind. Will assure the contest continues. Other worthy causes exist too - fan funds, medical funds. I think having the executive committee report back and establishing a nest egg would be a good idea. Vote to table passed unanimously. Alexis voted too, "Sometimes it doesn't pay to abstain."

Announcements. Charles Gilliland said December 04 Paramount is releasing Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow. Lee is already working on getting passes. Chuck Divine said that the apocalypse is at hand since William Shatner is releasing a new album. Keith said Evecon is in Reston this weekend, someone should take flyers. Mike Walsh saw the theatrical version of His Dark Materials in London and pronounced it "jaw-droppingly good." Production will have to be rewritten if it tours because it takes advantage of special effects at that particular stage. His most recent book, Limekiller, was reviewed in the Post and praised by Michael Dirda. Lee has a new job as his agency changed its name. It is the Military Services Employment and Displacement Command. His book plundering party continues.

Two Views of Stephen Baxter's Coalescent

Samuel Lubell's Review

Stephen Baxter is known for writing hard science fiction with the emphasis on the science, chock full of speculations on science and the laws of space and time. So Coalescent (Del Rey Books $25.95) seems a bit of a departure for him as a writer since it reads almost like a mainstream novel with about half of the chapters being straightforward historical fiction (albeit one in which King Arthur makes an appearance). The science in this novel is that of sociology (or maybe organizational theory) with a little bit of evolutionary biology thrown into the mix.

The novel begins with the death of George Poole's father and the discovery of a photograph showing George as a toddler with an unknown twin sister. This sparks a midlife crisis for George, who, dissatisfied with his current job and separated from his wife, becomes obsessed with finding his sister. He learns that his family, then very poor, gave his sister Rosa up to an obscure religious order with strange connections to his family - the Puissant Order of Holy Mary Queen of Virgins. Joining him in this search is a former school friend, Peter McLachlan, a science nerd who appears to have wandered in from a different Baxter novel. Peter is involved with an online SETI group and prone to paranoid speculations on why so much of the universe is composed of dark matter. Together, they find out that the order was interested in George's sister because his family is descended from the founder of the order, Regina, who lived in Britain during the start of the fall of Rome, when the empire lost its toehold on that island.

The first-person narrative of George's investigations alternates with the story of Regina growing up a spoiled daughter of a wealthy Roman family in Britain, whose status becomes more and more impoverished as the novel goes on until she and the family of her former slave have to teach themselves farming and all the skills necessary for survival. Baxter does an excellent job with her character, undoubtedly the most developed in the novel, as she moves from spoiled daughter, to rebellious adolescent, to leader of her people, to queen (to war leader Arthurios of Camel fort) to cold and calculating religious leader. Baxter paints a fascinating picture of life in the fall of civilization, with Regina knowing that a better life exists and thinking of that as normal with the current conditions something to be survived until normality returns. (There are some wonderful passages comparing the wonders of civilization with the pitiful products her town's workshops can do.)

And ultimately, Regina is willing to do whatever it takes for the survival of her family's bloodline, even pimp her daughter's body in exchange for passage to Rome. Once in Rome she finds her own mother, who had become part of the remnants of the pre-Christian Vestal Virgins, and through sheer force of will and instinct, forges them into a religious order based on three rules: "Sisters matter more than daughters" (because only a few are allowed to breed so that the whole group can be one family of sisters rather than separate groups of family lines), the Orwellian "Ignorance is strength" (because the structures of the group allow it to survive), and "Listen to your sisters" (so that peer pressure keeps everyone in line.)

Finally, halfway through the book, a third plotline evolves. Rosa, who has become influential in the Order, chooses 14-year-old Lucia, to become one of the mothers. This ultimately leads to Lucia meeting an American in Rome and choosing to run away from the order. Naturally, they encounter George and Peter and reveal some of the biological secrets of the order that leads Peter to suspect that the Order has evolved into a whole new species. Together, they find out that the order was interested in George's sister because his family is descended from the founder of the order, Regina, who lived in Britain during the start of the fall of Rome, when the empire lost its toehold on that island.

The back of the book describes it as first of a series, Destiny's Children. But the book must be read to see what it is about. The only logical conclusion is that the story is about George and Peter's daughter, which gives us a look at human society under conditions something to be survived until normality returns. (There are some wonderful passages comparing the wonders of civilization with the pitiful products her town's workshops can do.)

Science aside, I found this an interesting novel of the "secret history" variety. Putting the Hive in Rome, the center of much of history, rather than a hidden backwater, was an interesting choice of Baxter's that worked to provide contrast - the center of western civilization hiding an alternative civilization beneath it. The Hive itself is dedicated to survival. It was created out of Regina's sense that it was easy for civilization to fall so evolved into a system independent of civilization and even of the individual humans that comprise it.

The back of the book describes it as first of a series, Destiny's Children. But it is hard to see where this plotline could go as the Hive, at least as shown in this book, is essentially a dead-end for humanity that has no drive for expansion (never spreading beyond Rome in 2000 years) nor any goal beyond survival. I suspect that the next book will not simply pick up where this one ended but will instead present a different course of evolution for mankind.

Readers who have avoided books by Stephen Baxter because of the stereotype that science fiction written by scientists have better science than fiction should certainly give Coalescent a try. This might also be a good book to give fans of historical or even mainstream fiction a taste of science fiction speculation.

Colleen R. Cahill's Review

Science fiction is often classed as hard or soft and this leads to arguments about definitions of each, which is superior, and people camping on each side of the question. It is wonderful when an author can write a work that goes beyond those boundaries. Such is the case with Stephen Baxter's Coalescent, which gives us a look at human society and what possible alternative evolutionary paths exist.
This is not to underestimate George's hunt. He deals with the legacy Regina has left, because she is the one who started things. Josh Winkler is a struggling artist in Euclid Heights, Illinois, who has a fairly good life. While artistic success eludes him, he has a solid marriage to Flo, a local doctor who supports both her husband and their daughter, Penny. Josh and Flo grew up in Euclid Heights and are tied not just by marriage, but by an event in their childhood: both their brothers were caught in an attack that killed Flo's brother and left Josh's brother severely brain damage. The Winklers are normal people, but with a twist in their past. This is much like the town, which has angled walking paths that are relics from the town's first mayor. One stormy night, Josh discovers if the right combination of emotion, weather and direction come together on these paths, he can travel back in time. Granted, his first trip is only fifteen minutes, but this only accentuates his oddness when the word leaks out to the town. And being a small town, everyone knows. More complications arise with appearance of a young girl who tells Josh she is from 1908.

A Shortcut in Time
By Charles Dickinson (New York, Tor, 2003)
A review by Colleen R. Cahill

With the publication of Quicksilver, it's official: Neal Stephenson has succumbed to the dreaded Epic Disease. Volume One of a promised 3-book saga weighs in at a carpal-tunnel inducing 900-plus pages. It also stands as a prequel to Cryptonomicon, Stevenson's previous puppy-killer. Divided into three parts, QS addresses Stevenson's theme of working out the hidden meanings of the natural world from two angles: first, as a tale of intellectual discovery at the seventeenth-century interface of alchemy and science; then as a picaresque journey across war-torn Europe; finally, as the resolution of the story lines when two of his major characters meet and interact.

The first part is the most satisfying for those interested in the history of science. Intercut chapters follow Daniel Waterhouse, a Puritan scholar and member of the Royal Society, from his childhood through his education at Cambridge (where he interacts with Isaac Newton and other luminaries, both real and fictional), through the Plague, the Great Fire of London, and dynastic upheavals from Cromwell through the Glorious Revolution. Concurrently, we jump ahead in time and breathlessly follow a sea journey to the Netherlands, where they are separated by an unfortunate investment on Jack's part and Eliza's reaction. Readers of Quicksilver will recognize both Waterhouse and Shaftoe as character names; the characters of the characters in QS seem to breed true, as the ancestors of those in the previous book are reflected in this one. Eliza, a native of Qwghlim (also appearing in Cryptonomicon), has no last name until she acquires a couple of noble titles under interesting circumstances.

Stephenson seems to have trouble presenting believable female characters. Not only is Eliza ingenious (she is a master of cryptography), but an accomplished dressmaker, stock manipulator, spiner of tales, mistress of exotic Oriental sexual techniques, and fearless rescuer of princes from kidnapping plots. And she's still a teenager! Oh, did I mention she's beautiful? However, until she is ennobled, she is the only character in the book with no last name. Eliza's third character is part of the problem of the novel's construction. The story lags a bit after the ascent of William of Orange. There is the extended resolution of Eliza's unintended pregnancy, with a frankly unbelievable lapse in suspended disbelief concerning the ambiguity of her child's paternity. And yes! Even such a superwoman can ultimately succumb to the frailties of the flesh! This, after remaining a resolute virgin for the previous 19/20ths of the book. These are quibbles, however, and did not stop me from enjoying the book overall. It's a long slog, true, but worth it. I look forward to slogging through the next two in the series.

P.S. There's bound to be a fannish controversy over whether this book is science fiction or not, just like there was when Cryptonomicon was nominated for the Hugo. These arguments remind me of Polonious' disquisition on categories of plays in Hamlet: "tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-
Schild's Ladder, by Greg Egan.
Reviewed by Keith Lynch

Egan has perhaps the best view of what a truly transhumanist, post-singularity future might be like. Mankind has spread through the galaxy. Illness, aging, and unwanted psychological states are all relics of the distant past. People move at will between inhabiting various custom-built highly fit bodies, robot bodies (some microscopic), and a purely software existence. Everyone makes offsite backups regularly, so that nobody will be permanently killed no matter what happens. At worst, they'll lose the last few hours of their memories.

All of mankind's knowledge and skills are at everyone's fingertips. No, not fingertips -- inside one's skull, available in microseconds. When someone is threatened by a thug with a metal rod, he loads a martial arts package in time to disarm the (unenhanced) assailant, as if he'd spent hours every day for decades mastering judo, karate, and all other martial arts. Almost any material object which can exist can be quickly and inexpensively designed and built.

The final theory of physics, which elegantly unifies General Relativity with Quantum Mechanics, was developed in their distant past. Almost in our own time. In fact, it looks a lot like the Loop Quantum Gravity that's the cover story of the January 2004 Scientific American magazine.

This theory has been perfectly in accordance with every experiment for tens of thousands of years. But there was one experiment which couldn't be done until then, due to the resources it required. The prediction is that it will create a small region of "novo-vacuum," a different state of space-time, which will persist for a few nanoseconds then disappear.

Much to everyone's surprise, the "novo-vacuum" instead proceeds to expand at half the speed of light. And keep expanding, non-stop, destroying everything in its path. Nobody is actually hurt by this, you understand. But it is an inconvenience. Do you abandon whole solar systems, or try to quickly accelerate them to the same speed? Or might there be some way to destroy the "novo-vacuum," or at least stop its expansion?

Most of the novel is set on a space station that's keeping pace with one side of this novo-vacuum, a few centuries after the experiment that went awry. Scientists on board are using the best technologies of the day to study the novo-vacuum.

Two factions develop: Those who want to stop the spread, and those who want to colonize the novo-vacuum, where the laws of physics are apparently far richer than in our world. In fact, there is evidence that intelligent life has already evolved in the few centuries since their "universe" began. At first the two factions mostly get along. But eventually violence is used, with various improvised weapons, from a metal rod to an antimatter bomb.

Though the space station is heavily computerized and networked, there is no "hacking". Egan realizes that computer network security is already pretty much a solved problem. Cyberpunk is not a plausible future in his opinion or mine. In the far future, if you want to disable a computer, you use an axe.

Egan is one of my favorite authors. If you're into truly hard SF, i.e. a look at what things might really be like in a few centuries if civilization doesn't collapse first, you should give him a try. Several of his short stories are available on his web page, http://gregegan.customer.netstream.net.au/.

Shadow of the Storm

Written by Kurt R.A. Giambastiani
Reviewed by Lee Strong

"There is no reason for any soldier to follow this officer except for idle curiosity." -- Legendary officer evaluation report.

And the same is true of Mr. Giambastiani's latest non-epic of elves and orcs disguised as very alternate American Indians and American "blucows." Mr. Giambastiani's basic problem is a lack of internal and external logic in his stories of American Indians riding dinosaurus across a North American almost cut in half by a gigantic extension of the Gulf of Mexico. His world raises a lot of questions that he simply never answers even when his plot turns on the nonsensical results. Instead, he presents a lead story in which US President George A.uster tries to make peace with the Indians, but is nearly assassinated in a bungled plot to disrupt the peace process. The assassin gets away with murder and so does the author.

I rate Shadow of the Storm as «« on the 5 star scale because the storytelling is clearly inferior to the average science fiction novel. -- LS

Treasury to Convert to Gold Bars

The 1/16/04 Third Friday meeting opened with Judy saying it is 9:15 (leading to a dispute over the nature of time) Mike Walsh walked in. Old business is Fifth Friday at Keith's, next 1st Friday at Candy's. At the last meeting we voted to spend up to $500 to get Capclave out of its hole and the motion to spend thousand on the sf contest to the executive committee. The treasurer reported $3,978.42 of which a significant part is SMOFCon $1,578 is unallocated. Eric was asked about accounts. Keith said that all we had was a checking account.

Madeleine moved that we convert our treasury into gold bars and put them under our beds. There was no second. Entertainment committee preoccupied with going to Egypt which he promised would be entertaining. Activities committee said people are working on American Film Institute film series. There's a possible tour of the space museum. Austerity reported that we're still here until the budget is distributed. Madeleine moved that we convert our treasury into gold bars and put them under our beds. There was no second. Entertainment committee preoccupied with going to Egypt which he promised would be entertaining. Activities committee said people are working on American Film Institute film series. There's a possible tour of the space museum. Austerity reported that we're still here until the budget is distributed. Madeleine moved that we convert our treasury into gold bars and put them under our beds. There was no second. Entertainment committee preoccupied with going to Egypt which he promised would be entertaining. Activities committee said people are working on American Film Institute film series. There's a possible tour of the space museum. Austerity reported that we're still here until the budget is distributed. Madeleine moved that we convert our treasury into gold bars and put them under our beds. There was no second. Entertainment committee preoccupied with going to Egypt which he promised would be entertaining. Activities committee said people are working on American Film Institute film series. There's a possible tour of the space museum. Austerity reported that we're still here until the budget is distributed.
For the past four years, I have been WSFA's semi-official email contact. When someone reads our web page, and wants to know about the next meeting, or Capclave, or anything else, they can email "steve", and "cathy green" as well as numerous other permutations of their names, and all their known email addresses. Elspeth's message would not have been held up had the From: field been more meaningful. As it was, it resembled spam in some other way. I used the old WSFA member whitelist as the starting point for my new general whitelist.

I've been whitelisting the WSFA email list for the whole two years it's been in operation. Messages from WSFA members directed to the list go to the list (unless they're in HTML, or with attachments, or mention "cold mountain", "battle of the crater", "twist of fate", "crisis", "peter pan", or "a clockwork orange", or any words that resemble spam in some other way). I will consider Bayesian filters, but those reject less spam than what I'm doing already, albeit with a lot less labor. I won't consider challenge-and-response, for several reasons -- see http://krebsonsecurity.com/2002/06/challengesresponse.html. Other proposals such as micropayments and hashcash have been discussed for years, but the infrastructure is still not there yet, so they're not options I can choose this year.

Starting fresh with a new email address is a possibility, but has the disadvantage that any messages sent by people who only know the old one would be lost -- and I'd have to keep starting fresh, as spammers learn one new disposable email address after another. Then there's the government's new CAN SPAM solution: By federal law, as of January 1st 2004, all spammers must use valid email addresses, and must stop spamming anyone who requests removal. If this sounds familiar, it's because it was the "solution" touted by spammers and their apologists a decade ago. It failed then, for the simple reason that spammers are crooks, not businesses, and because nobody prosecutes the spammers for fraud, forgery, theft of services, or anything else, even though the vast majority of spammers have been in violation of numerous laws for as long as there's been spam. No new laws were needed.

However, just so nobody can say I didn't give CAN SPAM every possible chance, I sent a remove request to every email address that spammed me in January. Needless to say, the vast majority of my requests bounced -- the addresses were fake. I guess I should have also gone to the FBI headquarters and filled out 27,000 crime reports. And then done the same the next day. And the next. Sure, that will work.

What I've chosen to do is a combination of disposable email addresses and whitelisting.

Blacklisting means accepting all email unless I can find a reason to reject it. That's what I've been doing. Whitelisting means rejecting all email unless I can find a reason to accept it. That's what I will soon start doing.

I will accept all email sent to the current disposable email address, no matter who it's from, or where, or how it's formatted, or what it says. And I will also accept all email sent by anyone whose name, email address, or domain is on my new whitelist, no matter which email address of mine it's sent to, or where it's from, or how it's formatted, or what it says.

This is a combination of the classic children's story suitable for children of all ages. The Darling children of Victorian London enjoy imaginative tales about pirates, Indians, fairies, mermaids, exotic settings, and, of course, children without any responsibilities. So they take the arrival of the spirit of Never Never Land, Peter Pan, in stride. Once the introductions are out of the way, the foursome fly off straight on til morning past the second star to the right. In a series of rollicking adventures, they explore the most exotic and lively of tropical islands, all the time dodging the menaces of Captain Hook and Red Haired Jill, not to mention a crocodile and a jealous fairy.

This is a delightful live action version that is generally quite faithful to James Barrie's original story. Never Never Land is well realized and the special effects are very well handled. Some minor changes from previous versions, including the addition of a Black Castle and the charming custom of thimble exchanges, keep things fresh. The characters and plot are well known to most fans, but that shouldn't stop the young at heart from enjoying a retelling of a true classic.

We rate Peter Pan (2003) as *** on the 5 star scale. -- SS and LS

Email to WSFA

By Keith Lynch

I'm impressed that Panix can check each incoming message against this whitelisted list in less than a tenth of a second. My whitelisting will use more computer power every hour than the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo programs used in their entire history.

I've been whitelisting the WSFA email list for the whole two years it's been in operation. Messages from WSFA members directed to the list go to the list (unless they're in HTML, or resemble spam in some other way). I used the old WSFA member whitelisted as the starting point for my new general whitelisted.

Messages from unknown addresses to the list go directly to me. If they appear to be from WSFA members, I forward them to the list, and add the new address to the whitelisted. This has only happened twice. Once, two years ago, when we got a message from "Weyrlady", until I figured out that was Meridel Newton. The second time was just last month, when we got a message from "elizabeth", and never heard from her again.

Under the new system, users of the email list shouldn't notice much difference. Messages from a completely unknown name and address will be rejected rather than held as they are now. However, messages in HTML, or with attachments, will be held rather than rejected as they are now. And messages mentioning

http://www.wsfa.org/journal/j04/2/index.htm
spammish words or African countries won't even be held, but will go straight to the list. Since HTML has been responsible for a lot more lost messages than mystery addresses, this will be a net win.

If anyone wants me to add any email addresses of WSFA members to the WSFA member whitelist, or wants me to add any names or addresses whatsoever to the general whitelist (of which the WSFA member whitelist is a small subset) please tell me. Note that having your email address on the WSFA member whitelist is not the same thing as subscribing to the WSFA email list. The WSFA member whitelist defines who can post to the WSFA email list, while the subscriber list defines who receives messages sent to that list. (WSFAns who choose not to subscribe can still read the messages in the online archives, at [censored from online Journal], but those are often up to a week behind.) I've added every WSFA member name and email address that I know of to the WSFA member whitelist, but only subscribed those members who asked to be subscribed.

So what if someone new wants to contact us? More than a year ago, I replaced my email address everywhere it appears on the WSFA web site, with a pointer to http://www.wsfa.org/email.htm. That page currently lists the address wsfa@KeithLynch.net, and warns people not to send HTML email. I will soon change it to list the disposable address wsfa0402@KeithLynch.net, with a warning to bookmark the page rather than the email address if the sender doesn't plan to email us right away. Next month it will be wsfa0403, then wsfa0404 in April, etc. Anything sent to this month's address this month will get through to me, even if the sender isn't on my whitelist, and even if it's in HTML. Once it gets through, I'll promptly add the sender to my whitelist, after which he can use any KeithLynch.net email address to reach me, including obsolete disposable addresses.

My filters log all the messages they accept and reject -- the purported sender, the subject line, and where my filters filed it, e.g. "kfl/trash/china -> /dev/null" if it was from China. Three lines for each message. Those of you who were at Fifth Friday saw these in real time, about one message every three seconds, more than 99% of which were rejected.

I've saved these logs since the beginning of 2003. About four million messages for 2003, about one message every eight seconds. And about one million so far for 2004, about one message every three seconds. This allows me to test my whitelist as if I'd had it running for the past year. I've identified several rejected messages that would have been accepted under the whitelist, and asked the senders to resend them.

Unfortunately, Panix only allows 75 megabytes for incoming mail, so it's not practical for me to save all the rejected messages, rather than just the logs. The logs are just three short lines per message, but the messages themselves can be any length. Some are the size of a Tom Clancy novel, meaning I could run out of disk space in less than five minutes if I were to try to save everything. If I were to run out of disk space, all subsequent messages, and logs, would be permanently lost.

I will also unconditionally accept all messages containing any of over six hundred key words or phrases on the subject line, such as "wsfa meeting", "first friday", "third friday", "fifth friday", and "wsfa journal". This is strictly as a backstop, not something to be relied on. Unfortunately, it's not practical to accept everything mentioning "wsfa", "capclave", "meeting", or "party", as many spams have those words on the subject lines. All of this is completely case insensitive. Wherever "ekovar" works, so does "EKovar" or "EKOVAR". Wherever "wsfa" works, so does "WSFA".

At Fifth Friday, I briefly discussed some of this. Elspeth suggested that someone else take over as email point of contact. I am open to doing this, but I don't think it's necessary. My concern is that someone will volunteer, and won't follow through. Or that they will follow through for a while, then let the mailbox sit unread for weeks after it becomes overrun with spam. In other words, it will become a less well controlled version of disposable email addresses.

I plan to phase in this change over February. Until March, I will be running the old and new systems in parallel, and no messages will be lost that wouldn't have been lost under the old system.

As I've mentioned before, I'd prefer wsfa.org email addresses, but our present host doesn't offer them. At Third Friday the club voted to stick with our existing host for at least another three months. However, I'd do the same things with wsfa.org email addresses as I plan to do with the keithlynch.net addresses.

While I like to hear from strangers, apparently that's no longer a universally accepted part of how email works. Symantec, a computer security company, recommends that people "don't open e-mail from an unknown source". Sigh.

Even though I will soon start accepting HTML email, I hope nobody will send it, since for people without matching software, it looks extremely ugly, and since numerous people are continuing to delete all HTML email unread. Also, I will still be blocking it from the chat list (since HTML can spread viruses to susceptible machines) albeit not by deleting it as I do now, but by manually un-HTMLing it and sending it on its way. If your mailer defaults to sending HTML, please see http://www.exploit.com/nominre.html for instructions on how to turn it off. Thanks.

The Library of Congress Professional Association's
What IF... Science Fiction and Fantasy Forum
Presents

Slipstream Stories in Verse,
or,
Can a Vampire Poet Pass for a Magical Realist?*

by
Anne Lane Sheldon
author of Hero-Surfing

1:00pm, February 27, 2004
Library of Congress, Madison Building, Dining Room A (on the 6th Floor).

Contact Colleen Cahill, [email address censored from online Journal] for more information. No reservations are needed: open to staff and the public.