

Short-story collection entertains reader



"Night of the Cooters" Howard Waldrop Ace Science Fiction

"Night of the Cooters" is an eclectic blend of short stories from Nebula Award-winning author Howard Waldrop. The title story tells how H.G. Wells' "War of the Worlds" was fought in West Texas.

No waiting for Earth viruses to kill the invaders — the natives take to shotguns, cannons, and dynamite.

Other selections are just as off-beat. "Thirty Minutes Over Broadway!" reprinted from George R.R. Martin's "Wild Cards" series, has the flavor of B-movies and old comic books in its telling of a foiled plot to bomb New York City. "Hoover's Men" puts Herbert Hoover (not J. Edgar) in charge of a federal force designed to regulate radio transmissions, and in the process America gets color TV before WWII.

Two of the stories deal with film. "The Passing of the Western" is a quirky tale, spinning its story by means of movie-magazine recollections of old-time westerns based on an alternate American Western history. "French Scenes" is an ode to the nouvelle vague, or French New Wave films of the '50s.

By far, the best story is "Do Ya, Do Ya Wanna Dance?" For everyone who's been to their class reunion, or who plans on going (and maybe dreads it), this is for you. It's a more realistic take on the grown

up Class of '69.

The ten stories in "Night of the Cooters" are interlaced with short introductions by Waldrop, giving some amusing background on the creation of each story. Some people find this annoying in books; here, Waldrop manages to avoid sounding egotistical or self-important, and the intros entertain almost as much as the stories.

"Night of the Cooters" is an excellent short read for an evening, or a rainy day.

—Sam Kepfield

Resnick creates alternative history in "Warriors"



"Alternate Warriors" Mike Resnick TOR Science Fiction

Mike Resnick is quickly becoming a sci-fi institution. Fresh off

winning a Best Novella Hugo last year, he is back with his third anthology of alternate history, "Alternate Warriors." The cover alone — Gandhi as Rambo — gives one an idea of what is to come.

Some of the stories are based on real events, like Resnick's own "Mwalimu in the Squared Circle," where Julius Nyerere and Idi Amin box it out, and Muhammad Ali referees, instead of going to war. Others are pure fancy, such as Lea Hernandez's "Al Einstein — Nazi

Smasher!," reminiscent of a "Captain America" comic from WWII.

Then, of course, there are more serious pieces. The cover story, "Because Thou Lovest the Burning Ground," by Michael P. Kube-McDowell, makes Mohandas Gandhi into a thug, head of a death cult, and not the renowned pacifist he was in our universe. Brad Lineaweaver stands Christianity on its head in "Unmerited Favor." Ask yourself — what would history have been like if Jesus handed out swords

instead of loaves and fishes? Or other men of God, such as Moses, or St. Francis of Assisi. Martin Luther King Jr. rates two stories, gunning down opponents of civil rights for blacks in both.

Like his previous two volumes, "Alternate Presidents" and "Alternate Kennedys," Resnick and his compatriots take a basic human craving, the need to ask "what if?," and fulfill it masterfully.

—Sam Kepfield

Ballet

Continued from Page 9

choreography with the eye of a historian — to attempt, at least, to view it in perspective within its context.

But that's not a very satisfying aesthetic experience. It's a little too academic.

And then there is the political aspect of Balanchine's work — the sexual stereotypes that he helped to create and codify in ballet.

In this as well his work has not weathered terribly well.

Again, he was working in a different era, under a different political climate.

But it just seems somehow wrong, to 1990 sensibilities, all these "big men and little girls" of Balanchine.

It's a shame, in a way, if thoroughly modern audiences are less impressed by Balanchine's work than previous generations.

Perhaps in the future a clearer perspective will render him more accessible.

But today, Balanchine is something of an anachronism — out of place in our time.

—Mark Baldrige

Millions

Continued from Page 9

dimension to the group.

"I think that I would almost say that he's kind of like our new life," she said.

Kushner, who is the manager at King Dollar Jewelry and Loan, is no stranger to the Lincoln music scene.

Before joining the Millions, Kushner played with Urban Roots, a Lincoln-based R&B band.

Kushner said he had enjoyed his first experiences with the Millions. The crowds have been especially great, he said.

"The thing that is new and the thing that is awesome is that the turnout in the clubs we play is good and it's young — it's just a great vibe," he said.

Kushner also praised the new album.

"It's a fuller sound," he said. "I think Lori has certainly transcended

(the) first CD, and her writing is really strong. I think it has some darker moods in it that really work.

"I think that Lee Popa, who mixed this thing, really left us much more raw, which really worked to our advantage. When he came to work on this, that's when the party began."

Unfortunately, local fans may have some trouble finding the record, which is scheduled to be distributed in Europe and Japan, where Dream Circle has an affiliate label, Amsler said.

The album has 11 tracks — including a radio edit of "Indians and Drums" — and may be available in the United States as an import, Amsler said.

The band has been searching for an American label to pick up the album for domestic distribution.

As for the future, the band doesn't really have any definite plans — except to tour.

Amsler said in the next few weeks the band would play some shows in the Midwest before traveling to Europe in November to promote the new album.



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CLASSIFIED INDEX

FOR SALE 000s

- 02 Appliances
- 05 Bicycles
- 10 Books
- 13 Clothing
- 16 Computers
- 20 Furniture
- 30 Jewelry
- 40 Garage Sales
- 10 Misc. For Sale
- 45 Musical Instruments
- 46 Office Furniture
- 50 Pets
- 55 Photo Equipment
- 60 Sporting Goods
- 65 Stereo/TVs
- 70 Ticket Exchange
- 90 Vehicles

SERVICES 100s

- 100 Adoption
- 105 Alterations & Sewing
- 110 Automotive
- 115 Bicycle Service
- 120 Bridal
- 125 Catering
- 128 Child Care
- 130 Cleaning/Laundry
- 131 Cleaning/Households
- 135 Computer Service
- 140 Entertainment
- 145 Gift Ideas
- 148 Hairstyling
- 150 Health & Fitness
- 153 Insurance
- 155 Instruction/Tutoring
- 158 Job Placement
- 160 Lawn care
- 165 Legal Services
- 173 Music Exchange
- 175 Photography

- 178 Pregnancy
- 180 Printing & Copying
- 182 Recycling
- 183 Religious
- 185 Rentals
- 188 Tanning
- 190 Tattooing
- 193 Travel
- 195 Typing & Resumes

NOTICES 200s

- 200 Rides
- 203 Spring Break Trips
- 205 Career Events
- 210 Announcements
- 215 Meetings
- 220 Greek Affairs
- 230 Student Government
- 240 Personals
- 245 Lost & Found
- 250 Wanted
- 260 Fundraising

JOBS 300s

- 300 Help Wanted
- 310 Child Care
- 320 Work Study Jobs
- 330 Summer Jobs
- 340 Internships

HOUSING 400s

- 400 Roommates
- 410 Housing Wanted
- 420 Rooms/Rent
- 430 Houses/Rent
- 440 Duplex/Rent
- 450 Apartments/Rent
- 460 Summer Housing
- 470 Mobile Homes/Rent
- 480 Vacation/Rent
- 490 Homes/Sale

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