

Two SoFla authors on new Haworth imprint

Positronic devoted to GLBT sci-fi, horror and fantasy

BY **JESSE MONTEAGUDO**
Book Critic

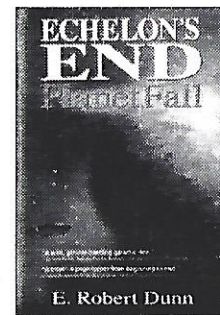
The Haworth Positronic Press is a new line of books devoted to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender science fiction, horror and fantasy. Edited by Greg Herren, himself a prolific mystery writer, the Haworth Positronic Press intends to publish new or classic works by the likes of Aaron Travis ("Slaves of the Empire"), Caro Soles, and Max Pierce. The first two books in the Positronic series are both by gay authors who live and write in South Florida:

"Mahu: A Mystery" (284 pages; \$22.95) is the first novel by Neil S. Placky, who is assistant professor of English at Broward Community College in South Florida. In spite of that, "Mahu" is set in Hawaii and shows a great deal of knowledge about Hawaiian people, language and culture. Māhū, the word, is a generally negative Hawaiian term for homosexual. "Mahu," the novel, introduces Kimo Kanapa'aka, a 32-year-old, mixed-race surfer and detective on the Honolulu Police Department's homicide squad. Kimo is also a māhū, though he has yet to fully come to terms with the fact. "Mahu" is, to a

great extent, Kimo Kanapa'aka's coming-out story.

"Mahu" is also a thrilling murder mystery. Kimo finds the victim in question while visiting his first gay bar, the Rod and Reel Club in Waikiki. As Kimo and his partner set out to solve the mystery, Kimo's sexual orientation becomes a public issue; and Kimo is forced to deal with the unwelcome publicity as well as with fellow police officers who refuse to work with a māhū. It is this combination of personal drama and exciting mystery – not to mention the Hawaiian setting – that makes "Mahu" such an original and interesting novel. Nor is this the last of Kimo Kanapa'aka. Placky has since written a Kimo short story, "Christmas in Honolulu," which placed second in a "Bad Santa" contest sponsored by Mysterical-E, a mystery webzine. Now it's only a matter of time before Placky will allow us to read and enjoy a second "Waikiki mystery."

"Echelon's End: PlanetFall" (320 pages; \$24.95) is volume three of E. Robert Dunn's "Echelon's End" series and, in my opinion, it is the best of the three. Volume one, "Last Generation," set the stage for the series and



introduced the reader to Dunn's alternate universe, and volume two, "Sideral Quest," was an exciting adventure story set in a far and friendless planet. In "PlanetFall" both Dunn and "Echelon's End" come of age.

This book continues the adventures of Capel, Dara, Moela, Retho, and Nicraan. Those of us who fell in love with these characters in the previous books will enjoy their further adventures. The first part of the book, which introduces an exciting new character, Jor Dansire, is science fiction at its adventurous best. But "PlanetFall" really gets going when the crew arrives in Sheey, a same-gender-orient-

ed society in which Echelons (gays) rule and "Opposites" are persecuted. All in all, "Echelon's End: PlanetFall" is a treat, a page-turner from beginning to end – and I look forward to the next volume in the series.

Short view

"Everything I Have Is Blue: Short Fiction by Working-Class Men About More-Or-Less Gay Life" (Suspect Thoughts Press; 250 pages; \$16.95) is the first collection of short stories by working-class queer, gay, or bisexual men. Edited by Wendell Ricketts, "Everything I Have Is Blue" features stories by the likes of Timothy Anderson, C. Brad Cole, Jim Grimsley and Royston Tester. They reveal a "gay world" that is vastly different from the affluent gay lifestyle that is too often portrayed on television, movies, books or magazines. Individually and collectively, the short stories in "Everything I Have Is Blue" tell tales that need to be told, by authors who know how to do it well.

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