



N'APN 233

The Official Organ

#233

Next deadline: May 15, 2017

OOPS Our cover lastish was “Fast Ship” by Cedar Sanderson. I inadvertently omitted the source.

<https://www.facebook.com/cedar.sanderson>

<https://cedarwrites.wordpress.com>

The official collator is George Phillies phillies@4liberty.net.

N’APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees. It is open to all members of the N3F. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read are welcome to ask to be added to the email list. Check with the official collator, who is George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609; phillies@4liberty.net; 508 754 1859; and on facebook.

To join this APA, contact the Editor, George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609.

I occasionally send a copy of N’APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of them will join N’APA.

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated in due time, as the collator is retired. Publication is always totally regular, though some readers question my interpretations of “is”, “always”, “totally”, and “regular”. N’APA has been in existence since 1959, but has transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

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The Contents of a Good Life issue #1, for N'APA, March 2018



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Curious. The new computer does wonders but after the electricity went off last night I had to search like the dickens all day to find the on/off switch to turn it back on again. Finally, my brother and his wife guided me through the way over the phone. Little things. I'm good at one or two things in life but lousy at all the rest. It figures.

Well, at least I learned what happened to my old computer. It seems it got so much dust inside that everything—including all the data—literally incinerated off the mother board. Time to start over. I know I'm a slob but this is getting ridiculous.

I may buy into a lot of things—and I have much to learn before my days are done—but I refuse to buy into the outdated Christian falsehood that there is something wrong with the human body and that the sight of that very same body is somehow demeaning to men, women and children. Those are the most dangerous of lies—the lies against the body—and I will speak out against them to my dying day.

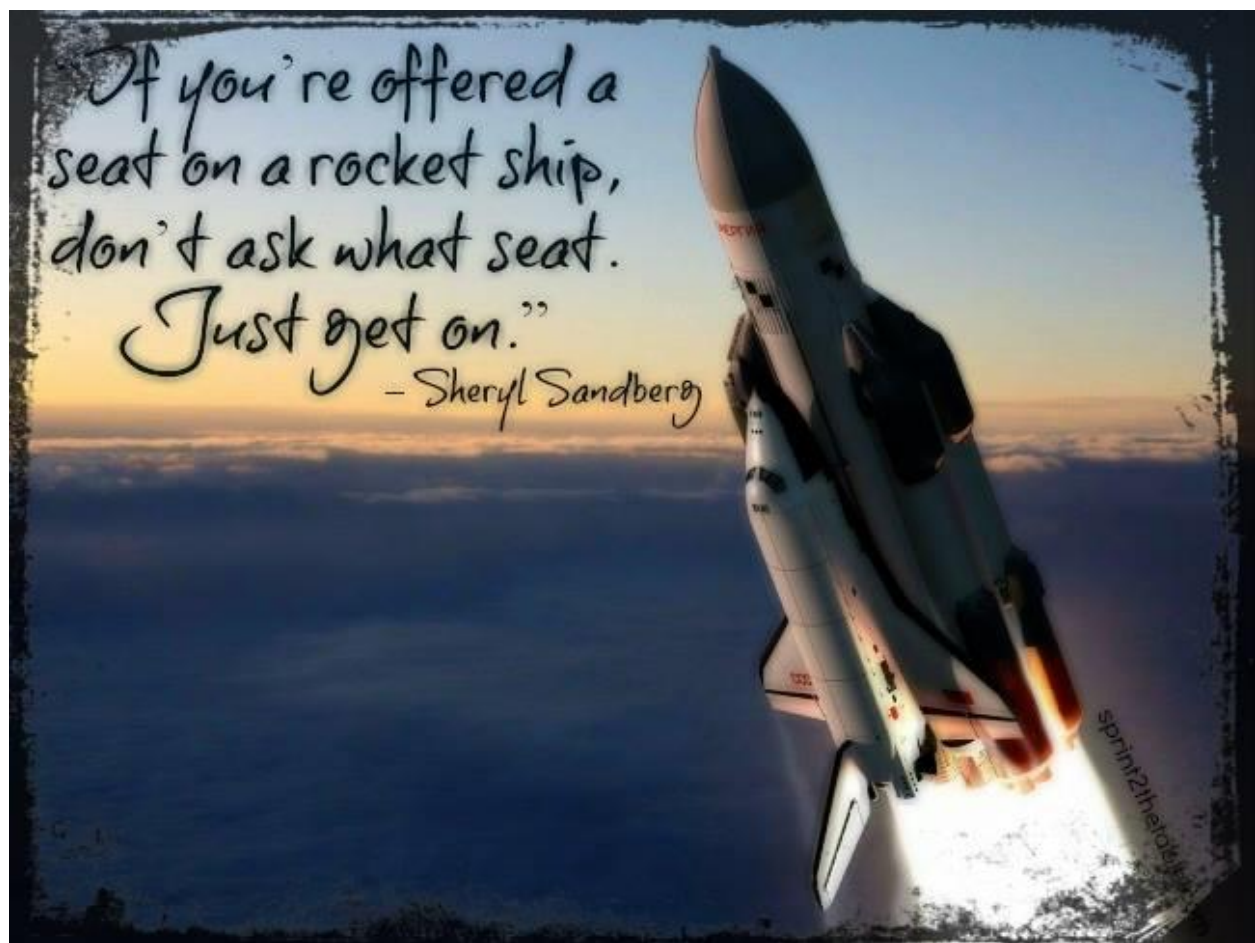
Some people seem surprised after reading my stories that I'm not quite as tough as they might have thought me to be from reading them. Well, what can I say? I've known some hard roads and I've known some easy pastures and right now I'm just as content as I can be to live until I die, with an emphasis on the "live" part. It just happens that at this stage of my life living consists mainly of a good book and a day on the Web. My days of drunken carousing are long past me. I just want to live my life in what peace I can until the Reaper takes me, preferably with a few good tales along the way. I am by nature a dreamer. I just do it by moonlight and a trail of broken hearts, that's all. And I do it all sitting right here in my easy seat. I can think of worse ways to go.





Plato the Lover

Caught between a past that holds no meaning for me
and a future about which I have no clue
I stay in the present
Where there is nobody but myself.
A cat comes my way as well as the first lights of the sunrise.
I am within and I am without
and I wait for the sound of thunder.



Conclusion

SYNERGY 11 *March 2018*



N'APA Mailing 233

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photoart released for free distribution

EDITORIAL: Blah, Blah, Blah *Wookie!* *Wookie!*

Notably if we want to use obtained art in our publications, it's best that it be cleared for usage, with consent or in the public domain. David Speakman has lately given me a link to art sources that are surveyed for these things, and I have switched to this search method, finding in it better accountability. I find that the art that is rated free for use has attachments on some of the art that says "this may be copyrighted", which is contrary to what the search says, so we see there a conflict of interests, just as governmental relations are interrupted by a variety of governmental factions. I notice at efanzines a whole lot of fanzine covers are art not likely directly obtainable by the editors, and I wonder what deals they have on them—perhaps none, since they all started using super-covers at once.

As for myself, the art I've been getting is not for self- or fanzine- aggrandizement,, but is art that I want a lot of people to see, which would be all right with the free artists, but might not be what art controllers have in mind. The free-for-use art is on the whole likely to be less spectacular than other art,, and those who like me favor the spectacular are under considerable constraints, but I think I had best be heeding them, which I have been more or less doing right along, but operating by instinct rather than regulation—so I am getting closer to regulations, which as I suggested are not laid out with any absolute clarity. "If you catch me stealing, please don't tell on me, I'm stealing back what used to belong to me."—Easy Rider. Well, I'm not making that quote my policy, but it seems like what might be relevant to all science fiction in terms of science fiction art.

Not that I propose that as an overall truism, but it's there.

Internet regs? You pays your money and you takes your chances.

A run of earlier N'APA Alliance Amateurs were obtained by a former OE from way back when and sent to George Phillies for filing and examination; he only had his own OEfficial publications saved, and I'm notating from one of the zines in that stretch of time, my own, as you'll see more of later on in this issue.

I seem like I'm writing for a wide audience or group of readers in Synergy, but actually, as is usual in an apa, I'm only writing for a few people, so of course those people in this apa are who I have in mind with my comments. So I hope everybody notices that I consider the matters I write about to be matters of interest here. Whether they are or not I'm not sure...always glad when I get answers to or discussions of it.

MAILING COMMENTS

The Murdered Master Mage. I saw the finished book, AGAINST THREE LANDS, displayed on various Facebook pages, looking just as you described it. It's like running a paper through a mimeograph and having it come out printed to have had this experience of description and completion, though the experience was had in the reverse order. The cover makes a good pick-up-and-read.

Not retaining files is not taking an organization seriously—I suppose early files have disappeared through gafiation. Gafiates are customarily po'd and do not pass along their files, as would a person normally leaving an organization.

I don't know much about the tape bureau; they never quite said what their function was. I supposed they dealt with cassettes, but I didn't see much action from them. Somebody told me their interest was in audios of all kinds, and it was kind of colloquial to call it the tape bureau.

I did some scrabbling around to find out why some of the transcript of "The Girl Who Saved the World" is done in red, but could not learn anything.

Archive Midwinter. I think we like a little fiction to our lives, though often we're getting too much of it.

I read FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS by Hemingway, and was surprised when it ended with the death of the main character. That makes it less of a story than a thesis related to the title. (That'd be a spoiler, but I suppose by now everybody's read Hemingway who's going to read him. THE GREAT GATSBY was really stupid, a wallow about how the title character was, and what the people around him were like.

The Silver State Age. Well, I think maybe I'll get some of that attention back to the NFFF with my author interviews. I'm letting them know on several fan group spaces what authors are appearing in each topic as it appears.

Notes From a Galaxy Far, Far Away. The weather you describe seems sane enough—hot in summer, cold in winter. Your heading says November while you write below of Christmas. Noting that Swycaffer remarks on your not updating your heading does make it look like there's some seasonal stuff going on. The heading's still outdated.

More blast in January and another in this mailing. I thought it would liven things up around here to refer back, and there we have it, it's true.

MORE EARLY N'APA

The FANDM ASSEMBLE! cover on the third issue of Rocket Fuel could not but relate to the two fandom united groups on Facebook, yet I have difficulty establishing any connections. It's not *hubris*—the cover came from Harry Hopkins' Fandom Directory where it was also printed, so perhaps the big influence I speculate emanated from there..It shows colossal warfare going on, more like fantasy warfare than sf warfare. Inside the cover of RF there is an elaborate statement of where it came from, along with an explanation of the cover of RF #2 having appeared also in Tightbeam. The artist on that one, Rob Miller, said he'd mailed it to a lot of other editors. Its publication in Rocket Fuel preceded its publication in Tightbeam. Steve Lefkowitz did the Fandom Assemble one.

Tom McGovern was running for OE again, and I said I backed him.

There's a short history of other apas in this issue—Saps, Ompa, Apa-H, Lasfapa, Apa-Nu, Frefanzine, Fapa, and Raps. I won't quote from it since it's the one I'm still giving, no change in my statements, when asked about any of the apas I wrote about.

The next item is "Personalities in NAPA", which has in it whatever I know about all of the other members, who were Mark Blackman, Frank Denton, Augustine Guaba, Greg Hills, Fred Jacobcic, Richard Llewellyn, Owen K. Laurion, Chris Martin, Rob Rose, Sally Ann Syrjala, Jack R. Herman, and the OE. I told about where else I had seen them. Also in the apa were Lola Andrew, Randy Fox, Derek McCullough, Roy Seiler, and Rebecca Lyons, about whom I had no data that the other members didn't have.

Following this were quotations from the round robins I was in, "circulated by the remains of the NFFF's Correspondence Bureau". The topics were Monte Python, Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Star Wars, Superman, World War III, Indiana Jones, SF Music, and Black Holes. Commentators were Lori Kilpatrick, Bob Rose, Pat Turner, Jeff Wilcox, Frank Bell, John Wayne Burt,, Ron Paloquin, Sharron Albert (who ran the rrs), Carl Wilson, Bob Dominy, and Rob Miller. Next was my mailing comments, and I'm sure the present readers here would be bored to hear these, except that synergy was being mentioned.

Issue 4, November 1982, was orgiastic, having entertainment in it, fiction, poetry, art, a letter column, fanzine reviews, and a continuation of the round robins quotations. Sharron Albert should have done that column, but didn't.. The letters were discussing Donald Franson's crackdown, things like that.. Brief mailing comments. Tom McGovern had returned as OE. I'll look at issue 5 & 6 next time, two months from now.

SECOND WIND

crack open a vault of ancient lore with me

"And yet he could not refrain from crying out in terror at what he saw when he passed through the great vine-draped pylons and entered upon the ancient road. He did not wonder that the curious Wichita had fled in panic, and had to close his eyes a moment to regain his sanity. It is unfortunate that some sense of pious reticence prevented him from describing fully in his manuscript the nameless sight he saw. As it is, he merely hinted at the shocking morbidity of these great floundering white things, with...an unmistakable trace of human blood in their flat-nosed, bulging-lipped faces."—The Mound, by H.P. Lovecraft

"In the shadows of the forest that flanks the crimson plain by the side of the Lost Sea of Korus in the Valley of Dor, beneath the hurtling moons of Mars, speeding their meteoric way close above the bosom of the dying planet, I crept stealthily along the trail of a shadowy form that hugged the darker places with a persistency that proclaimed the sinister nature of its errand."—The Warlord of Mars, by Edgar Rice Burroughs

"And sore bewildered also was the Norseman Lars. Bound hand and foot he lay beside his fellows, also bound. Long had he lain unconscious from a blow across the skull, a blow to send an ox to its oblivion. Lars opened his eyes and blinked at the darkened sky. 'By Tor!' he muttered. 'What afterworld is this? Why are the gods not here to welcome me?'

Tazor, the Nubian, spoke. 'Gently, my friend. The blow you took upon the head still rings among the hills.'

'Seven I slew,' Lars said. 'Or was it nine? I lost the count.' "—Whom the Gods Would Slay, by Ivar Jorgensen

"'We've got to hide you, laddie,' I told him, shaking just a trifle with suppressed excitement. 'They'll check the club, that's certain. What about my digs?'

'If there's time. You know, old chap,' he said, a faint grim grin touching his haggard features, "I rather feel the sands running out. I doubt that we can make your place.'

'Rot.'

'No, no, it was miraculous that I came past the doors without being spotted. And I'm

tired, suddenly, more tired than I've ever been. I think I'm done.'"—The Usurpers, by Geoff St. Reynard

"And then, as the giant tiptoed toward the door, crouching from the waist, his huge fists dangling below his knees—as he stepped cautiously forward—the dwarf plucked him by the sleeve.

'Wait a moment, Hercules,' he pleaded. 'I have a plan. It's so ridiculous, so simple! It will make you laugh. But listen to it, and then you can go. And you, too, Echo. Come close and I will whisper to you.'"—The Terrible Three, by Tod Robbins

"In all his lifetime of perhaps twenty years, it had never occurred to Burl to wonder what his grandfather had thought about his surroundings. The grandfather had come to an untimely end in a rather unpleasant fashion which Burl remembered as a succession of screams coming more and more faintly to his ears while he was being carried away at the top speed of which his mother was capable." —The Mad Planet, by Murray Leinster

"When Doctor Adam Weismann felt discouraged, the view from his window cheered him. Sydney's water-front is imposing at all times; now the southern summer had lent it a dreamy beauty peculiarly Australian. For twelve miles up the coast the wharf lights sparkled and glowed; new stars, white, warm, and near, but cold and remote like his own Dakota stars, glimmered in the hushed waters of the bay. Hundreds of ships lay sleeping in the docks or drowsed at anchor." —Dian of the Lost Land by Edison Marshall

"Afterwards, it seemed to Marc that it was Toffee who suggested that they hide themselves in a movie theater. It seemed so, but Toffee stoutly denied it. But Marc's memory of that dark period was far too confused to be relied upon. Certainly, though, it was Toffee who invited the taxi driver along so that they might hide the money bags under the seat of the cab." —The Spirit of Toffee, by Charles F. Myers

And that concludes another issue of my zine.

Stay in touch, my friends.



The end is not only near, it is now past the end of the zine.

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 233

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3 Mar 2018

Comments:

Cover: Lovely! Spaceship and Nebula! (And thanks to the Hubble space telescope, we know that space really is that pretty! I remember the "Palomar" phase of observational astronomy, when, yeah, it was pretty...but black and white!)

George Phillies (OE): I guess I haven't thanked you recently for running N'APA. Thank'ee most kindly. It's a fun "blast from the past," in the days when N'APA was actually done on paper. I really do find the modern all-electronic era wonderful, but I do know there are those who pine for the physicality of 'zines and books. To me, progress has been the greatest of boons. Anyway, thank you!

George Phillies: Great that you're about to finish *Against Three Lands!* Spiffing! I'd love to be one of your beta readers, if that's feasible and desirable. I'm pretty good at catching typos and dangling participles and the like. Anyway, yay! Also nifty that you're about half finished with *The Girl Who Saved The World!* Nice!

re cover art...ah, now that's got me stymied! Where is a good place for truly free cover art images? I've searched for "free clip art" and most of it isn't really free,



but has a one-time cost. There's no recurring license fee, but a (modest) initial fee. Where's a good place to glom images for cover art that is really and truly free, even if crummy low-quality public domain stuff from 1910.

(I know a comic book artist who fills in his backgrounds with black and white public-domain engravings. The effect is a bit cluttered, but effective withal. Tom K. Ryan occasionally throws in a spt of public domain engraving art in his "Tumbleweeds" comic strip.)

(I've been making use of "Canva," an online resource that does cover designs at a comfortably low cost. Not free, but quite affordable. Only once did I really splurge, and commissioned a work from an artist on an art-sharing website. \$50 well spent...but absurd, given my sales figures, which are certainly unprepossessing.)

Fascinating (and a bit creepy!) that the old Short Story Contest administrator would give you grief over putting a rough estimate of the postage on the return envelope. That certainly wasn't me! We do have our first entry, by the way, in the contest for 2018. Your labors have been wonderful, truly sterling, and have brought in a

good many contributions, bringing the contest back from non-viability.

re Jules Verne, I have been told that there was a (very mild) feud between Verne and H.G. Wells. Wells happily accepted things into his stories which were totally impossible: anti-gravity (Cavorite,) super-speed, giant animals, and, of course, time travel. Verne preferred to extrapolate existing scientific facts, but not to create whole new "fantasy" elements. He didn't think what Wells wrote was really "scientific" fiction, because of these impossible (and thus non-scientific) elements.

Most of us writing SF today are pretty much stuck introducing at least one impossible element: faster-than-light travel. Pretty tough to do a "Spaceships and Empires" story -- e.g. "The Mote in God's Eye" -- (a truly spiffing novel!) -- without FTL.

I do have some sympathy for Verne's position, and there is most certainly a place and a role for SF that doesn't introduce vast new impossible premises. For instance, there's a really spiffing novel -- fifteen or twenty years old, now, I'd guess -- where a guy is in the pathway of a major particle accelerator when someone starts a sequence, and he received a fatal dose of radiation. He's a "dead man walking," and only has so long to solve the mystery of his own murder. The story is mostly plausible in the "real world."

On the other hand, the readers love a good story about robots and AI, and that's wholly "fantasy" today. (Heh! But not for long!)

This sequence of "The Girl Who Saved the World" is mostly taken up in a council meeting of the world's great and mighty, and I enjoy that hugely. These guys are so human in their angst and pride and definitely in their overweening hubris.

John Thiel: Another lovely cover, an elegant blending of tech and nature. The snow-covered rocks are depicted most beautifully!

re covers, ooh! Tell me more about Shutterstock? (I'll go and snoop and see what they're like!)

Laumer's "Retief" stories were remarkably whimsical, although best taken in small doses, as there is a kind of "sameness" to them that would be less comfortable if one were to read an entire collection in one sitting. Primarily, he wrote "comedy of stupidity," where his hero triumphed by being the only one in the cosmos who had "common sense."

He sometimes pushed that theme too far, such as in his novel "The Glory Game," where the hero was the only one who had any sense...which the author gave to us in the form of the guy making wild ass guesses which always turned out to be right. It was a very painful case of "The writer being on the hero's side." I personally found it very uncomfortable to read, and, in fact, my own second novel, "Not In Our Stars" was deliberately and consciously written as a rebuttal to Laumer's novel, wherein my hero made a lot of really wild ass guesses...which were not always right. That's the way it works in the real world!

I'm sorry to say I don't know who Roger Dee and George Wetzel are or were. If they were local fans, our orbits never intersected.

Robert E. Howard created "Mitra," the god of the more euro-civilized Hyborians, as a kind of "Jehovah Lite," rather in the position of the Christian God in the era when the word was still being carried to the "fringes" of civilization, such as Norway or Ireland. Mitra is certainly not the "one" god in the Hyborian age: no one could believe that after having faced Set in person! But Howard

was describing, in allegory, the missionary epoch, and it was clear that Mitra was on the way to becoming the focus of an "omni" set of theological beliefs. (Omnipotence, Omniscience, and at least some hints of Omni-benevolence.)

Interesting pair of poems to close with, and another spiffing bit of art!

Kevin Trainor Jr.: Mighty scary situation, needing a car to earn an income...and needing an income to fix the car! I live in very fear of when (not if, but when!) that happens to me next.

re S.M. Stirling, I, too, have no use for the "Draka" mythos. I know people who really love those books and stories, and will speak of them glowingly, but every word they utter makes me more and more certain (if you will excuse my modifying an absolute) never to expose myself to that stuff. I've read other of Stirling's work, and enjoyed it, so I guess I can compartmentalize my reading.

David Drake, too, is a bit creepy. His novels far too often entail people solving non-violent problems with violence. In one throw-away sequence, a helpful banker had set up an account for a man's wife, without the man's consent. The man points a gun at the banker and makes it clear that he believes he has every right to kill the banker for what has happened.

Drake is pretty good at "war" but when it comes to "peace," I really, really dislike his concepts of civilized behavior. I love the "Hammer's Slammers" cycle of novels and stories. (And even then, in the middle of war, his characters commit an awful lot of murders.)

re battery life, aye, it's still way too limited these days. I have to re-charge my smartphone once in the middle of the day, as well as overnight. The battery, when

running the GPS app, isn't strong enough to last through the whole of a good eight mile hike, and I love having a GPS trail of a long hike!

Agreement re Pournelle: he was sometimes loud and obnoxious, and his political views alienated many. (It wasn't just the content of his beliefs, but his nastiness toward anyone who dared to disagree. I have strong beliefs, but I don't go around saying that anyone who disagrees with me is a brain-dead idiot and a traitor to the constitution! Pournelle was that kind of guy.) And, aye, he was very influential in the founding of military SF, and was quite a master of it.

re fannish tolerance, most of the people I hang with are of the "open to all" philosophy, and we wouldn't dream of "disinviting" nearly anyone at all. Back in the 80's, there was a local mid-size fan organizer (I won't stain the page with his name) who used "disinviting" as a political weapon, to the degree that it actually became a mark of pride to find yourself on his list. (This was the plot of Walt Kelly's The Jack Acid Society Black Book, a darkly funny Pogo collection.)

Lorien Rivendell: (I'm not actually sure of the best etiquette here: by which name should I address my comments to you?)

Tell me more about an Instant Pot? What can it do for me that a decent microwave cannot? I have been toying with the notion of getting a rice-maker, because I can never quite seem to figure out how to boil rice properly. The result is either a mushy slurry, or solid rice-cakes. (I actually kinda like the rice cakes, so there ya go!)

My sister and b.i.l. also file their taxes on paper by mail. My own are complicated enough, I have to go to an accountant and pay (a hell of a lot!) to have them done. I recently learned that I qualify for a free tax preparation

service (because I'm poor, doggonit) and so I'll do that next year.

Back Cover: elegant. Any Trek fan will think, "Ten Forward!"

Current Reading

A friend put me on to the "Sandman Slim" novels by Richard Kadrey. These are light-horror/urban fantasy, with a hell of a lot of sheer violence. They aren't true "horror" novels -- which I can't cope with. The themes are horrible, to be sure.

In these novels, the protagonist comes back to earth after having been in Hell for some years, killing people in the arena for the entertainment of Hell's overlords. Back on earth, he really only knows one way to solve problems: killing. So he goes around killing pretty damn profligately.

The novels maintain the reader's comfort-zone because the people (and monsters) that get killed pretty much deserve it. In fact, the protagonist describes himself as "A monster that kills monsters." All taken with all, he actually comports himself in a remarkably moral fashion. (He does steal a lot of cars...)

Kadrey's style is light and flippant, with gobs of current cultural references. I think he overuses these, and that they limit his novels. Fifteen years from now, they'll be unreadable, because no one will know what he's talking about. Also, as a matter of personal taste, I really dislike using cultural references as a consistent tool.

(As one example, he decides that zombies make him think of the movie "High Plains Drifter," and so zombies become "drifters" for the entire rest of the god damned novel! This is in violation of the rule Robert Heinlein coined, regarding things that are "funny once.")

I was astonished and delighted when I discovered that Kadrey was (about the time of this writing) also writing the "Hellblazer" comic book. Once I saw his name on the credits, I started to recognize his style. He writes John Constantine quite well indeed!

The Magic Mountain

For years -- for decades! -- I've heard mention of Thomas Mann's novel, "The Magic Mountain." I searched a bit and found an e-reader copy, and I'm grinding through it, but with every page, I wonder more and more what the big deal is supposed to be. The book was touted to me as an important and influential classic -- but it seems to be nothing but a rather shallow story about a young man put into the society of others in a tuberculosis sanitarium in the Swiss Alps.

And the damn thing is huge! More'n a thousand pages! Now, it's pleasant enough, with vaguely amusing sequences, and the occasional pause for some philosophy. But why this novel was ever considered a "classic" is, at present, totally escaping me.

A Sea of Sorrow and A Song of War

Two novels-as-sequences-of-stories which are good examples of this form of construction. I read them in reverse chronological order, which is perhaps a good thing, for the re-telling of The Iliad is much better than the re-telling of The Odyssey.

These books are not by a single author, but by a collaborative group, each of whom contributed one story to the cycle, and the cycle accumulates to become the equivalent of a novel. This is an interesting way of

assembling a book. Alas, the results are mixed, because the tone is so terribly drear and dismal.

In A Sea of Sorrow, there is not a single likeable character. The worst slander is against Odysseus, who is made into an outright villain. He is shown raping Circe, violating the sacred law of hospitality against Polyphemus, and otherwise behaving like a stinkard. Now, the whole point of Odysseus is that he is morally compromised, a complex man who has both good and bad features. So to emphasize only the bad is to lose sight of the real relevance (and ground-breaking innovation) of the original story.

A Song of War (which I read second) is quite a bit better, although, again, pretty much everyone suffers in this re-telling, and is presented as uglier, nastier, greedier, and morally shallower than in the original. (The authors also incorporate elements from Eurpides, Virgil, and others.) This book is closer to a canonical re-telling of the original, going into additional detail, but without making any truly revolutionary re-castings of the central story. It is a fair re-telling of the story, as opposed to A Sea of Sorrow which is grievously unfair.

The Earthsea Trilogy:
A Wizard of Earthsea
The Tombs of Atuan
The Farthest Shore

News of the recent passing of Ursula K. LeGuin prompted me to re-read these books, which I have read and read again so many times I have long since lost count. They are among my favorites, and, especially, The Farthest Shore is, of any book I have ever read in all my life, my very most favorite. If I were put in Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 universe, and were to memorize a book in order to preserve it against extinction, The Farthest Shore would be my choice. If I were cast into a dungeon for the rest of my life,

and given only one book to take with me, this would be the one.

The books present universal themes in an approachable fashion. A Wizard of Earthsea is about a child's coming to his understanding of the meaning of death. That moment comes to us all, and many of us can still remember exactly when it happened.

The Tombs of Atuan is about a girl coming to an understanding of her body. The tombs are an obvious Freudian "womb" symbol, and the entrance of a man into the tombs is very clearly a metaphor for sex. (This is not strained Freudian interpretation, but something about as obvious as Aslan being Christ. It's an intended metaphor, and is the whole meaning of the book.)

But as for the third book, I am less certain. I never got around to writing to LeGuin to ask, and now I never can. I have a personal theory that The Farthest Shore was written as a Jewish rejection of Christianity. In the book, a man has found a way to defeat death, by dying and coming back, and he offers this path to any who will follow him. But the result is horrible, not wonderful, and leads to the degradation of his followers, and the slow fading away of all that is good and true in the world. "There is a hole in the sea, and the luck is draining away."

As I see it, this is a Christ metaphor (not much different from C.S. Lewis' Aslan!) but as seen from a Jewish sensibility, where coming back from the dead is a bad thing, not a good one. (Imagine the hideous social ramifications if all our ancestors came back and lived once more!)

I do not know if this was what LeGuin intended...and I guess, now, I never will!

The Silver State Age #9
March 14, 2018
an apazine for N'APA 232

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OBLIGATORY NATTER

Since lastish, I have replaced the Satellite of Love (my Toshiba laptop) with a refurbished Dell Optiplex I bought from Amazon for about \$300; I then spent another \$200 getting a high-end video card installed so I could play some of the newer games like *Fallout 4* and *Nier: Automata*, although so far this semester I have scarcely had enough time to play games on my phone, let alone the computer. Along with the Dell comes a free but unwanted upgrade to Office 2016, since I couldn't find my copy of Windows XP and I wasn't feeling contrary enough to buy a copy of WordPerfect Suite. Besides, I have to have a copy of Office 2016 for one of the courses I have to take at UNLV, and as I previously mentioned, the thing is free thanks to the university's IT department.

After a few weeks of confusion and intermittent motivation circuit failure, I am finally plugging along in my classes and getting things done. This has been aided by some confusion in my English 101 class, where the original instructor has been replaced by a horror writer who very much resembles the late Carolyn Jones, who some of you will remember as the actress who played Morticia Addams (nee Frump) in *The Addams Family* TV series. (I'm hoping to recruit her as a sponsor for a UNLV chapter of N3F, or at least get her to join up.) She basically rebooted the class from zero, gave us full credit for our first writing project, and published a syllabus and a schedule, which her predecessor had not. We have four writing projects due by the end of the semester, and it is going to be hard for me to muzzle my opinions concerning some of the papers we've been given to analyze. Still, I made it through a course on Liberation Theology 30 years ago, so I'm confident I can make it through this. It is still a little disorienting to be in classes with people a third my age.

The Kia's transmission got fixed, the student loans came through, and I have been putting in a decent number of hours in the tax mines. Since things have slowed down at Nellis AFB, I've been dropped from the schedule there and am back to my old stomping grounds on the south-central side of Las Vegas, with some additional shifts added at my manager's other office. I'm unlikely to do enough returns to make commission this year, but frankly, given what they're paying me for my hourly draw, I don't much care. I'm doing all right and nibbling away at credit card debt, so life is pretty good.

Medically...well, I suppose it could be worse. After eight years of being off insulin and controlling my diabetes through diet and drugs -I'd mention exercise but I'd be lying - my blood sugar has gotten to the point where my primary care doc at the VA has gotten tired of waiting for me to get my act together and prescribed insulin. I'm not too happy with this, but it's nobody's fault but my own. The leg wounds continue to heal, the BPAP machine keeps me sleeping through the night, and in general, I'm doing all right. As the userpic I use on LiveJournal for medical posts says, "Not Dead Yet".

Comments will have to wait until nextish, since I have a ton of homework for all my classes due tonight.

NOTES FROM A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY #12

March 2018

For N'APA 233

Lorien Rivendell

(Lauren Clough)

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Errata

Whoops! I think my last zine was numbered correctly, but it was misdated. It said it was for November 2017, when, in fact, it was for January 2018. I store my zines as a Google Doc in Google Drive and make a new copy each time I want to write a new issue. I then update everything in the header, except sometimes I miss stuff. Thus, wrong numbers or dates. I'm probably the only one who cares.

I realized my last issue also included a confusing sentence, due to editing and not proofreading thoroughly. The new supervisor was supposed to start in December and then started before I wrote the issue, the second week in January.

Inspection!

We finally got word in mid-January that the big state inspection will happen toward the end of March. Later, it was announced that it would be in early March (it's happening as I finish this issue). That put everyone into hyperdrive panic mode. One wouldn't think this would be too horrible news, since the higher-ups in the agency are super organized and have been making sure we maintain compliance all along. But that doesn't keep the panic at bay, a feeling that is passed on down the ranks. It also doesn't mean that everyone is doing what they are supposed to be doing all the time.

This inspection is important, because our licensing depends on passing the inspection, and there are critical indicators (health- and safety-related things) and then other things that they look for. We strive for perfection, and we often do achieve it.

I'm back to "just" direct care. At my level, we don't feel the pressure quite so much. We do get asked to do deeper cleaning and they look more closely at our documentation than they usually do. But, you know, if we are doing what we are supposed to be doing all along, what is the point of freaking out over the biannual inspection? Because noncompliance - both major and minor - suddenly shows up upon close inspection of the books.

The day of the choosing resembles the Hunger Games or the Lottery. The house to which I am regularly assigned was not chosen.

Whew!

Technology

The Instant Pot, which looks a bit like R2D2, has helped to encourage me to cook more meals at home. It's so much easier to pop into a restaurant ("Welcome to Moe's!") or pop a TV dinner (are they even called that anymore?) into the microwave.

I haven't found that the IP shaves off all that much time, as it still takes time to get up to pressure and then it has to cook the food. I might have better luck if I actually follow recipes made for the IP, but I find I tackle IP cooking the way I tackle traditional cooking and "Iron Chef" it with whatever happens to be on hand.

My Kindle Fire decided it was not going to charge. Sometimes it would charge part way and then stop. Sometimes it lost its charge while plugged in. I thought it was the charger. Since I had lost the original charger and was using my phone's charger, I bought an Amazon-specific charger. That helped for a while. Then it stopped charging consistently again. I switched outlets. That helped for a while. I swapped out cables. That helped for a while. Finally, I Googled Kindle Fire not charging and found that other people have this issue and they suggested what I've already tried. They also suggested that I use a Kindle Fire-approved charger and cable. I ordered a set from Amazon. That works. (And I found the original charger the other day, while looking for something else. Maybe it's me, but it happens that way all the time.)

My new HP laptop does charge, but I must keep it plugged in most of the time, because it doesn't hold a charge. Okay, sometimes it hold a charge for an hour or two. Other times, I must keep it plugged in while using it.

Every once in a while, I get a case of phone envy. I upgraded my smartphone to a Samsung Galaxy Note 8. I missed the S-pen I had with my Note 4. I wanted it more for the stylus and the camera. I'm just learning what the camera can do. I've taken a few winter shots, and I'm hoping as spring progresses, I'll get out more and get a chance to see what sorts of things I can really do with it.

Email

For those who had a hard time following my email changes, here's the Reader's Digest Condensed version:

Verizon: We're getting out of the email business and giving it to AOL, because AOL does it so much better. Peace out.

Yahoo: Hey guys, guess what! Verizon just bought us because they are so much better at whatever they do than we are! See ya bye!



I attended a projection photography event. This photo is a woman standing in front of a photo projected on the wall. It reminds me of a scene from a horror movie.

COMMENTS ON N'APA #232

George Phillies, The Murdered Master Mage: Along with the joys of pet ownership goes the sorrow of their passing.

I gave up on my NaNo novel (I made it to a whopping 3060 words, while the goal was 50,000). I will try again in April, as I have the freedom to choose my own word count goal, and I set the bar quite low at 10,000 words.

I bought *Schooled in Magic*, but haven't had much time for reading for pleasure lately. I need to start making time, because it's certainly not going to magically appear.

I contacted Jon Swartz and dropped the ball, because ... mumble mumble ... time ... mumble mumble....

John Thiel, Synergy 10: I was in N'APA back in the 1990s. If I recall correctly, one could become a member if the group was not at capacity (I forget how big it could be), I assume in order for the finished publication not to be too unwieldy. I never saw it reach capacity. We had to send the collaborator US postage stamps or a check to cover postage, because the zines were sent through the mail. We had to copy our own zines and mail them to the collaborator. It was so primitive back then. We also had a minimum participation of contributing 2 pages every other mailing.

I would have no problem with an issue of N'APA being sent to the entire membership of N3F. Not every issue, but one random issue as a sample so everyone else can see what they are missing out on and perhaps think about joining N'APA.

All sorts of things randomly end up in my junk email folder. And then stuff that should be filtered into the junk folder make it to the main email folder. I've pretty much given up on sending junk mail to the junk mail folder, because my email server never seems to catch on that that's where such emails belong.

Jefferson Swycaffer, Archive Midwinter: Thanks. While cats match my lifestyle much better than dogs (I'd have to be home much more often to walk dogs in all sorts of weather), I've opted not to rush to get another cat. My housemate's cat comes upstairs on a semi-regular basis to visit me, so I'm not *completely* catless.

NaNo was an epic fail at 3060 (out of 50,000) words. Oh well. I'm finding I also like to dabble in drawing and painting and photography. I have plenty of creative outlets (not of which I'm particularly good at), so I often take the means of least resistance and most quickly and easily finished.

Kevin Trainor, The Silver State Age #9: Ugh! I can see how a car in the shop can but a cramp on your Uber driving. And ugh! Financial aid! They can be maddening to deal

with. I'm sure the rules have changed several times since I needed financial aid, but I was fortunate to have been enrolled in just enough classes to qualify but few enough classes that I could work full time while going to school. I hope all is resolved favorably at this time.

Thin clients ... it sounds too much like discrimination against more well-endowed clientele than referring to electronic devices.

Every once in a while, I will actually go to my Facebook groups and check out new activity. FB is always changing its algorithms about what it thinks I want to see. And, true, there is a constant stream of chatter from friends, groups, and pages. I might stop scrolling just before the next thing I really want to see, but I must stop at some point. I even have a few local news and police pages on "see first," but that doesn't necessarily mean FB actually lets me see them at all.

REVIEWS AND RANTINGS

Movies

The Circle (2017): This movie seems to have mixed reviews. It seems most people didn't much care for it. I, on the other hand, rather liked it. It's a rather disturbing look at what our world *could* become.

Star Wars: The Last Jedi (2017): I've seen this twice (so far). Many die-hard fans hate these newer movies. I enjoyed it, maybe because I try not to overthink it. I enjoy all the *Star Wars* movies for their entertainment value, not any illusion of realism.

The Conjuring (2013) If you want a creepy movie, this will fill the bill. If you want reality, this probably isn't it. Sure it was allegedly based on a true story, but that claim is controversial. Just enjoy the movie. As with *Star Wars*, don't overthink it.

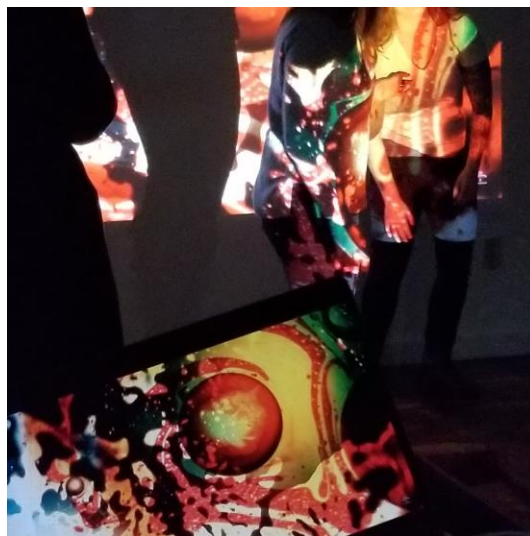
First Knight (1995) - The first time I saw this was in a drive-in movie theater. It was the second of a double feature, and as I recall, I had a hard time staying awake. Yay for streaming, because I was able to watch it again recently. Wikipedia notes that this film is notable for its lack of magic and the age difference between King Arthur and Queen Guinevere. I also noted, this time around, the lack of acrobatics in the sword play.

The Hunger Games trilogy: I saw the first movie in the theater and just had to read the books. I then saw the rest of the movies in the theater. I recently rewatched them all.

Highlander (1986) This one started out rather boring, but it got better as the movie wore on. As with *First Knight*, this one had sword play without the acrobatics, They spun around a bit, but I think that was a necessary force of momentum. Better to spin than to fall down and be defeated. I missed how the immortals were created. Or what, exactly, the “prize” was supposed to be. This might be because I was multitasking (as usual) or because it wasn't actually explained well in the course of the movie. Apparently, the “prize” is omniscience.

Total Recall (1990) was better than I thought it would be. I saw this for the first time recently. It was rather confusing, trying to figure out what was dream and what was reality. I suppose one could draw one's own conclusions. Or read Wikipedia, which didn't agree with me.

The Emoji Movie (2017): This movie was nominated for worst movie of the year for good reason. The only reason I wanted to see it was because Rachel Ray was excited about being in it. She had a very tiny part. Watch this only if you want to feel your brain cells exploding. Or if you just want some noise in the background as you work on some project.



Another photo from the projection photography event. This one is of the photo on a laptop and on the wall. I just think it turned out kind of cool.

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First, my new novel *Against Three Lands* is out. Sales are better than sales of *Minutegirls-Second Edition* over the same time period after launch.



That's Morinekozion's cover painting. She did beautiful work.

Now for comments on the last collation:

We had a fine Cedar Sanderson cover.

Synergy: It is interesting that many years ago there was considerable discussion in club zines of what the N3F was or was not doing, frequency of mailings, and so forth. We do not see that as much these days, perhaps because matters are being better managed. Perhaps members care less. You have an interesting accumulation of letters and other material from different people. It is always interesting to read the impressions that some people have of us, even if the impressions appear to be a bit askew from reality. Good work!

Archive Midwinter: Yes, Project Gutenberg means that books that would otherwise be lost are raised from the dead to the benefit of all of us. Unfortunately, the Disney Copyright rule – Mickey should never go out of copyright – means that they do not close on the present very rapidly. We

are having a very late winter here, with three Northeasters in two weeks, and a fourth incoming, so my plants are currently all 'under that pile of snow'.

I collect board wargames, and have at this point a decently large collection. My particular interest was AH Stalingrad, so I have written two books on its strategy. With respect to old authors, note also Bulwer-Lytton, who did write a real SF novel. He was Drakeized. There were people who read his novel and thought the pseudoscience he made up, the vril force, was real. Drakeized? David Drake wrote an Analog short story about Nazi Flying Saucers from Antarctica. He got large numbers of letters from people who thought this was the Analog science fact article. He turned his short story into a fakefact pseudo-non-fiction book on Nazi flying saucers, complete with fake photographs of saucers taking off, and apparently found it sold respectably well.

The Silver State Age: Kevin, sympathies on car, money, and college bureaucracy issues. Hopefully these challenges will all come to good ends in the reasonably foreseeable future. I keep meaning to find a copy of *Starship Troopers* but never get around to it. My interest is the instructor's attacks on Communism. I want to confirm that they are all lifted from Marx's *Das Kapital*, namely they are the straw men that Marx has no trouble demolishing while advancing his economic theories. Most readers do not seem to notice where those arguments came from, and what they might say about Heinlein's actual political opinions.

I agree that these web-based everything in the world appliances are asking for trouble. "Hello, we are the Elbonian People's Republic Third Grade History, Computer Hacking, and Terrorism class. We have taken your office refrigerator prisoner. To receive the release code for your lunch, please mail twenty-five cents in stamps or coins to Hackers R Us, East Klangdoodle, Elbonia." I have also noticed time speeding up, and am shedding less useful activities to slow it down again. I retired. I am also in the process of retiring from politics, and will be done this year before my birthday, I hope. It appears that the tax changes will put my taxes up though my income wanders enough from year to year that it would take much work to be certain of the outcome.

It would be nice to have a history of the N3F, but the archives tend to float away. The notice makes sense. Perhaps I am just hearing more about them, but the real-politics feuds within fandom are getting a bit strange. I hear about Del Arroz and others fairly regularly these days.

Notes from a Galaxy Far, Far Away: I am not into all these electronic contraptions. Particularly annoying the recent time that I travelled and rented a car, are the buttons labelled with mystic shapes rather than words. I had a Chevy Cruz, needed ten minutes to find the lights, and never did figure out what some of the displays were supposed to do. I do have friends who have these radio telephones with cameras and computer apps, etc. I do not see the point. Nor was I able to get the radio to work other than intermittently. On the bright side, this year I was able to file my taxes electronically.

We now advance to Chapter 9 of *The Girl Who Saved the World*, which was recently relocated to appear before Chapter

Chapter Nine
The Invisible -Fortress
Morning
January 14, 2018

I'd be even more delighted to say that on the fourth day I was fully recovered. Not hardly. Not with the amount of damage I'd taken. The healing matrix was doing all it could, including prodding me to eat more, a request I was happy to honor. At least all my teeth were in the right places. Regrowing teeth is really unpleasant. However, it was day four after I left the Maze, so all the bruises were vigorously reminding me of their existence. That's what day four is like, the time of maximum discomfort. The matrix changes how fast you heal, but some matters remain the same. I felt like I had a really bad case of flu, something I only know because I can read other people's minds.

I was sore, stiff despite morning exercises, and half-inclined to go back to sleep. The worst part of being uncomfortable was that I could do very little about it. Mind control on yourself is fine for averting severe pain, but awareness of all the discomfort is tied into the healing process. It's part of how the matrix knows what needs fixing. The ungifted trick of aspirin and warm tea does not help. After all, having a good set of gifts does mean you are mostly immune to being poisoned. I assume Mum was teasing when she told me not to try breathing nerve gas just to show that I could. I knew perfectly well that I could, but saw no reason to take a chance on it, if I didn't have to. Immune to poisons, though, also means that drugs like aspirin and codeine don't work on me, so minor aches and pains are something I have to live with. The chemicals in coffee are kind of at the edge. Like I said, it's a while until I discover if chocolate matches the fairy tales about it.

Breakfast was things that were not much work to cook. I dropped frozen waffles into the toaster, heavy cream into the mixer, and pear compote into the microwave. My stock of orange juice had a while to go before I had to reconstitute from frozen. I finally remembered to turn on the video, and then very much wished I hadn't. There was the League Peace Executive in its chamber. The ambassadors weren't screaming at each other, which made their words all the more frightening. Half the Great Powers were promising to send personae to attack me, so soon as I was found, no matter where in the world I was at the time. In particular, no matter if I were found inside the territory of another Great Power. The other half of the Great Powers were saying that if the personae of another Power showed up to attack me, in their territory, they would come to my defense. My vigorous and violent defense. To his credit, the Japanese—no, Satsuma Daimyo—ambassador pointed out that I might get annoyed and shoot back. Satsuma viewed the likely outcome at that point to be unacceptable. Discussion went downhill from there. I had assumed that people would be grateful that I had recovered the Namestone. Instead, they were preparing to start wars over me. An argument about which approach should be used to execute me, the Aztec god-feeding ceremony being discussed at some length as a closer, was a tiny bit

dismaying. I am perfectly happy to believe that priests of Huitzilipochtli can flay someone alive without killing them, preparatory to frying them and then cutting their still-beating heart out, but I don't need them to prove it by doing it to me.

I finished my breakfast, strongly considered putting some more pear-raisin compote in the microwave, and decided that I should check on my cats and horses first. I did that yesterday, mentally, and I could tell from their minds that everything was fine. Everything, of course, except they missed having seen me. I rinsed everything and dropped the dishes into the dishwasher.

I felt awful, but Medico said I should stop whining, that exercise would be good for me. At the back closet I changed into my barn-cleaning clothes. Bending over to slip on my heavy outdoor socks and sneakers reminded me of some of my bruises. It reminded me a lot. However, I wore black sneakers. No girl in America would be caught dead in black sneakers. White sneakers? That was totally the opposite. Sometimes I don't quite understand that sort of thinking. Actually, almost all the time I don't understand that sort of thinking. I slipped into my heavy, loose windbreaker, my right arm complaining loudly even though I was very careful, and dropped into a paper bag four apples, two big chunks of maple sugar, and some cat treats. It was cold enough I could pull up the hood on the windbreaker without looking suspicious. That was enough to hide my hair.

The barn was two hundred yards well downhill from my house. I did it at a slow walk. The realtor had apologized profusely to the person he thought was my mother for the bad layout. He was actually speaking to me. Fortunately, I'm in a state where lawyers never got involved in conveyancing. When it came time for everyone to sign the papers, the title insurance people confirmed the past owner had signed, they thought they witnessed my mother signing, and we were done. I signed. I paid for it, after all. It's truly wonderful how putting down the cash in advance, a good chunk in silver cartwheels and gold thalers, makes people agreeable, especially when you offered a bit more than the asking price. Not too much more, not enough to make anyone suspicious, just enough that you could say "I really want your house. And I wouldn't dream of interrupting your vacation on Pago Pago. The embassy can witness your signing, and the people here can witness mine." Everyone was happy, especially after I paid the closing costs.

There had been a time, right after mom threw me out of the house, when I was panicked about where I would get money. Fortunately I already had another persona ready. *Pointelisme* flew, teleported, was very good at long-range telepathy, had extremely solid force fields, and was very good with tools, just like me. After all, she is me. Close-in solar observatories run into technical problems, but very few persona are comfortable flying into the solar corona to fix them. It gets a bit warm there. The people who hired me could tell I was completely comfortable with viewing the sun from a million miles away. I did not mention that I was completely comfortable because three months ago Mum and I had flown to the core of the sun just to see what was there. I got to use ultravision to look at the solar deep structures. Yes,

I have a real headache afterward, but I can use ultravision. Notwithstanding the dozen past technical human civilizations that have studied them, people really do not understand what the deep structures of the solar core are, other than that they are highly regular, huge, not made of physical matter, and gradually change in time.

A reasonable solar observatory costs five billion dollars to construct, another billion dollars to get into low solar orbit even with persona help, and tends to break down. The people who hired me were delighted to pay a large sum of money in cash, provide me with the tools, and walk me through everything I would need to do. Pointelisme's garb is opaque everywhere, not to mention not vaguely formfitting. They had no idea who I am. Everything worked almost perfectly, except half the bolts were seriously stuck. It is truly wonderful what telekinesis can do to amplify the torque your screwdriver is applying, in a way which absolutely for sure will not damage the head of the screw. I switched out bad modules for good modules, looked carefully at everything to see if anything else was going wrong – rather I looked carefully and the three people watching through my eyes checked if anything else was going wrong – and came back to earth. I now have in my subbasement an extremely large amount of cold cash. Cartwheels and gold thalers are so much better than bank transfers or paper money. If you are careful to heat treat them, there is absolutely no way they can be traced, which is why vast numbers of people insist on using them.

It was a perfectly respectable walk out to the barn, and would've been considerably more of a walk if we had had a half-foot of snow. I say 'barn' but the lower level is a three-and-a-fraction-sided shelter, while the top level is enclosed. The land is low enough that I do not get snow very often, rarely more than half a foot, and besides snow shoveling is superb exercise. Snow does mean that the horses prefer that I feed them. I spotted my Appaloosas in the lower pasture grazing. That pasture had gone to seed in the fall, so they would have had plenty to eat, even if there had been two feet of snow on the ground.

I momentarily remembered a peculiarity of history. There are perfectly adequate numbers of references, a few thousand years old, that if you leave a horse with a big pile of barley it will eat itself to death. Modern horse breeders think horses are not that stupid. I decided not to call the horses while I mucked out the barn. Some work was needed. The weather had been bad enough that the horses had taken shelter for a day or so. Medico said 'emphatic yes' on the work as exercise; exercise kept various bad things from happening where I had deep bruises. Every so often, I simply had to stop until the pain receded. Cleaning was a real chore, even with the robot manure spreader, because I really had to lift everything close to one-armed. Spreading hay afterward was also not a great deal of fun. Yes, telekinesis would've made it a whole lot easier, but I don't use my gifts at home if I can possibly avoid it. The gift you do not call cannot be detected. My doing mind control on myself, suppressing the pain so I could sleep, was not avoidable

Toward the end I had a feline audience. The two barn cats had noticed that I was back and were watching from a

safe distance while I went about my work. After all, Bluebell and Columbine were quite certain that once I was done cleaning up the barn I would give them treats, scratch their stomachs, and comb their fur. I did go up the stairs to the perch where they had their nest. There was a considerable pile of straw, clear hints that they had found this, that, and the other thing to line it inside, and at the far end of the perch a neat stack of tails where various rodents had contributed to feline diets. The automatic cat feeder appeared to be working just fine. Its storage hopper was good for another several weeks, by which time I wouldn't mind hauling a 30 pound sack of cat food from the house. I have fixed the feeder once, and can fix it again, but working with tools is going to be a chore until my shoulder heals.

The cats like regular warm lunches. Careful examination of the tails indicated that they were probably spending most of their time hunting in the fields and bringing dinner home. I sat with my legs over the edge of the perch, dropped a cat treat on each side, and waited not for very long. Soon I had a large cat leaned up on each side of me, both of them rubbing their heads against my arms as they waited for me to give them more treats or better yet a good combing. That went on for a solid 20 minutes, at the end of which I was out of treats, the curry comb had been cleaned several times, and they were both purring loudly.

At the sound of horse's hooves, I clambered back down the stairs. Usually I would just lean forward and rotate one-handed off the ledge. It was just seven feet, enough so I'd barely flex my knees when I landed. Not today, thank you; I was too beaten up. A horse's lips nuzzled my hair. I pivoted happily. "Oh, Daffodil, you've really missed me, haven't you?" A second Appaloosa came into the barn. "You, too, Snapdragon." The horses really loved being hugged, especially at the same time, but my right arm was not going to cooperate. Not today. I produced from the bag a pair of MacIntosh apples, and dropped them toward the newly-cleaned barn floor. The ponies greedily gobbled them up, and repeated when I gave them another pair of apples. I did hold the maple sugar in my hands, carefully. Daffodil and Snapdragon waited patiently for their combing. They also got a careful check of their hooves. There were no stones, no signs of other issues. Vigorous scratches behind their ears were clearly appreciated. "You want me to ride you, don't you?" I asked. "I'm really sorry, but you're both going to have to wait."

What else needed doing? A slow walk around the house and barn, slow being the fastest I could manage, showed no weather damage, no sign of people attempting to force entry, no mark of anything else unusual. Keeping an eye open for approaching cars, I walked out to the mailbox, slipped open the rear door of the hopper, and pulled out everything that had been delivered in the past week. The nice thing about a hopper type mailbox is that the post man drops things in the front end, but has no way to tell how often the mail is being picked up. What did I find? Newsmagazines. Advertising. Three new bank statements. All of my bills were on automatic payment, so as few people as possible ever saw one of my checks. I realized I'd been out dealing with the barn and the cats and the ponies for several hours now. I don't usually need

nearly that long, but until arm and ribs recovered I was going to be slow.

I left my barn cleaning shoes in the box at the back door, hung my barn cleaning clothes in the back closet, dropped all the mail on my desk, and went to my room to shower and change. I'm sure if anyone else had been around they would've agreed I had a distinct smell of horse. The hot water felt very good over various bruises and strains.

My target today was one of Mum's forbidden books. Yes, I was feeling really out of it. I'd put off reading any of those books while I prepared for the Maze. I might not get much out of them, but I was not going to wait any longer. *Liouville's Butterflies* makes remarkable claims about historic time. I'm not sure why Mum didn't want me to read it. I curled up in my comfortable chair, my feet on the large hassock, with a pot of mocha, pitcher of milk and vacuum mug at my side, pulled up a quilt, and began reading. The front part of the book was fairly simple. I could even understand it. There are computer pictures of how atoms move in air. They show -- I noticed that the book skipped the proof - - if you make tiny changes now, in not very long what happens is hugely different. If you do time travel -- I did not just tell you whether I can travel in time or not -- go back not very far at all, and make very small changes, when you come back the world can be totally different. The famous story is the fellow who traveled in time to just before the maiasaurs started their march to intelligence, smelled a flower by shooing away a butterfly, and when he returned to the present there had never been a dinosauric civilization. Most small changes have tiny effects, but some are different.

Liouville was a French mathematician. The fellow after him was an American, Gibbs. What they showed, the part I had to struggle to understand even slightly, is that the past is as big as the future. No, let's be honest. I really did not understand almost any of the math parts. For what they needed to prove, they used calculus. I'm not terrified of a single derivative, at least if someone else is taking it. I even know sort of what they are. Kind of. I think. Maybe. Well, I asked Mum what they are, and she told me.

No, I'm not one of these people who have infinite math genius, but Mum always said I was way ahead in math. That's way ahead, even though I actually have to learn the stuff, not have Mum pass it to me mind-to-mind. Things you learn mind-to-mind you aren't creative with, not easily, so I'll have to work really hard to write great love poems in Atlanticean. I'm heartbroken, truly heartbroken. Mum did pass me lots of things not quite mind-to-mind, but she was mostly interested in helping me learn how to use my gifts effectively. She thought using gifts was way more important than math, or science, or money technology. I could learn those the usual way at my usual speed. GR, my usual speed is not slow.

In any event, Gibbs wrote down a whole forest of derivatives in a big square block. Down on my study pad went 'Hamiltonian', 'Jacobian', 'determinant', 'permutation', and a bunch of other words I don't know. I suspected there were a lot of parts I did not know yet, even before I got to the

forest of derivatives. When I reached the derivative forest I took a break for the caramel ice cream and fudge crumbles...a lot of fudge crumbles. Still, it was a forbidden book, and I have all the time in the world, if I'm real careful, to learn it. All the time in the world? While I'm doing heavy-duty healing, I'm aging backwards. Balancing that so I never get older...that's really hard.

The original Gibbs proof about the past and the future was two short paragraphs of which I could make neither head nor tail. The book spent 30 pages breaking the Gibbs proof up into small parts. Each part was supposed to be easy to follow. The fellow who wrote the small parts is said to be the greatest science writer since Amizov, Amizov being the muse of clear science writing. Except when I talked about muses with Mum, for Terpsichore Mum had an image of this statue, but for Amizov she remembered fondly this old guy with funny whiskers. I even understood two of the parts that he wrote. It's just that after you had followed all the small parts you had come a very long way, and you wondered if you had really come all that way or if the wool had been pulled over your eyes.

I skipped to the end. The Forward said it was GR to skip like that. There was the image, translating the forest of derivatives to a simple picture. The picture I understood. I think. The picture is a line of pawns on a huge chessboard. The pawns represent whole worlds where history started out slightly differently. They start out next to each other, farther away sideways being stranger. By the time you get well sideways across the chessboard, history is completely different. The start points are ancient time. The simple view of history is that the pawns all move forward one space at the time, always staying in their own file. Worlds that start very similar to ours end up very similar to ours. Worlds that start out very different end up being very different. The butterflies show that every so often a pawn takes off sideways, so two pawns that start next to each other do not end up that way. The pawn next to ours marches off sideways and ends up halfway sideways across the board. That's maiasaurs not becoming intelligent.

You might think that would simply leave a gap in the file next to ours. No, there are as many files at the start of history as there are at the end. What Liouville and Gibbs showed, and someday I will understand that part of the book, is that every file was full at the start of time, so when we reach the present every file must still be full, one pawn per file. If the pawn next to us took off and ended up way across the board, there must be another pawn that started off someplace way across the board and ended up at our shoulders. I thought the mirror imaging looked pretty obvious. We're not someplace special. If some of our nearby-at-start pawns end up someplace else, pawns from someplace else must end up nearby, because if they didn't we would be at someplace unusual, someplace pawns from far away could not reach. Lots of people get extremely upset with the idea that world history could've started off completely different than ours, but when we get to the present the two worlds are almost the same. *Liouville's Butterflies*, the forbidden book, is the famous proof that some worlds converge. The rest of the book is the arguments about what Liouville's result means. And if you

were a parallel timeline believer, the “United States of America” Ambassador was conclusive proof that you were right.

My den had a very comfortable sofa, and I had a warm blanket. At some point, several cups of mocha later, I drifted off to sleep for half the afternoon, waking when I was ravenously hungry. Grilled steak, salad, and rice mixed with artichoke hearts and pine nuts simmered in chicken broth, did quite nicely. The healing matrix insisted I break out more ice cream. It was burning through calories like mad to do repairs, and I had to eat enough to catch up.

Uncomfortable or not, I made a list of all the things I had to start doing. Living by yourself is a real chore. Schoolwork. Housework. Home improvement. Exercise. Okay, serious exercise waits until my ribs and shoulder finish reassembling. At some point, after I am completely recovered, I need to work up my nerve enough to deal with the Namestone. I had done the Maze, and now I had second thoughts about the next step. I really do have to finish healing. Yes, the Namestone was perfectly safe, sealed behind a quarter inch of Impervium, but in the end I have to deal with it. That’s I have to deal with it, not it gets to deal with me. The latter is a real danger. First, I have to recover from several hand to hand fights, gifts carefully suppressed, followed by the League Elite Strike Team and the Screaming Skull vigorously trying to kill me.

It wasn’t that late in the day, the sun not yet approaching the winter horizon, and Medico spoke up for more moderate physical activity. I walked back and forth between the work shed and the family room, on each trip carrying a single bookshelf, painted two weeks ago, the enamel now being cleanly cured. Carrying a shelf under each arm was just out until my shoulder finished healing, and mounting the shelves one-armed would be tedious, but I could at least get the shelves into the right room. A solid hour took care of that chore.

Finally, it was time for real studying. Chemistry and astronomy were on the list for tonight. I felt terrible, but when I really focused deeply on what I was reading the pain faded. Chemistry and astronomy are fun. Up on the screen came my chemistry reading. A side panel reminded me about the classes I was neglecting. The answer appeared to be all the science, math, rhetoric, everything except the topics I had crammed to prepare myself for the Maze. The good part: If I’d gone to a public school and taken a three month vacation every year, I’d be incredibly far behind where I am. The bad part: Studying is something you tend to forget how to do. I would be slow for a few days yet, but then there would be serious catch-up. Nonetheless, a while to settle down, and then I sort of forgot how uncomfortable I was in favor of the periodic table of the normal elements, and the electron orbits that made the table the way it was. After an hour and a half Medico interrupted. It was my still-early bed-time. I did what it told me to do, and went to bed. Well, I did after fifteen minutes of peeking at the lesson for astronomy, this being the extended chapters on archeological explorations of the planets, moons, asteroids, and Kuiper bodies, much of which made no sense that anyone could find. Yes, I have flown to some of the ruins

myself, and I can’t explain them either. Oh, a simpler riddle. Who or what is ‘Kuiper’? The name appears in historical records of several past civilizations, with no explanation.