

N'APA 248

September 2020



The Official Organ

#248

Next deadline: November 15, 2020

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

The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - abontides@gmail.com

Procedure: Please Read:

George Phillies will collate and mail, but submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer. No harm is done if submissions get sent to George, but the process should be to send them to Jefferson.

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 George.

We regularly send a copy of N'APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of you will join N'APA. Please join now!

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 and the preparer has a full-time job. 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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Super thanks to Jose Sanchez, who just sent us a TON of art for use as covers!

THE CONTENTS OF A GOOD LIFE #14



Carnival in Venice, Italy

View of Frederick, Maryland

NAPA MAILING 248

September 2020

Will Mayo, 750 Carroll Parkway, Apartment 9B, Frederick, Maryland 21702. wsmayo@yahoo.com



I cannot imagine any stranger world than this one and surely no alien planet could ever beat ours when it comes to weirdness. Who could ever imagine a crazier leader than the president of my country? Or a stranger religion than the Christians here have it when they praise the wealthy and demonize the poor? What about those entrepreneurs that deny death in the face of all the evidence and fund all kinds of schemes to live forever? Yes, this is definitely the strangest planet, the craziest nation. It is hard to imagine what happens next. Just sit back and enjoy the show.

Being the know-nothing in a class of normal and always the odd one in my family growing up I found comfort in the world of pretend. Rushing home every day after school in the 1960s I would be sure to catch the latest episode of DARK SHADOWS (and there was always AMERICAN BANDSTAND and SOUL TRAIN, of course). Afterwards, I would read my Tarzan and Archie's comic books and head over to the movies (matinees there came at fifty cents apiece) where I would see the latest Vincent Price thriller. Before heading to bed, I would find myself curling up with tales out of Jules Verne and Edgar Allen Poe, of which the latter's stories would leave me shuddering under the covers.

Later on in life, I discovered Rod Serling's NIGHT GALLERY and Darren McGavin's THE NIGHT STALKER. Such tales thrilled me and took me away from my world of classroom taunts and lonely walks in the woods back of my house. It was around this time I began to write stories and poems of my own that also transported me to other worlds. None of these tales remain now in my possession but a handful of decades later I continue to write other tales that see their way to print in such magazines as **Pablo Lennis** and **Surprising Stories**. People who read them appear to like them and their pages give me camaraderie among the lost souls of the world.

Looking back, I have to say that the world of pretend made me the man I am today, a believer in all the possibilities of make-believe.



Abraham Lincoln, my nation's 18th president, was checking on the wounded in my city back in the days of the Civil War when one general's case in a house close to the old courthouse drew his attention. The general was aching for breath and as Lincoln held his hand the old soldier passed away. "He won the battle," the president said. "He will

be remembered.” Gently, he closed the man’s eyes and walked away.

Over a century and a half later, it is said that the general’s spirit still haunts the house in which he died. Children play with the ghost and adults give rise to strange tales in my town. As for Mr. Lincoln, it is said that he still haunts the theater in which he was shot by a deranged actor late one April evening. I live in a country of old ghosts, you see, and my city alone is full of them. Just one step from the living by way of an unmarked grave. Tourists come to see the sights and one local guiding attraction is the trail of the possessed. Citizens and spirits alike mug for the cameras and play into the nights for all the fun that can be gotten out of one battleworn town.

For myself, I take a back seat to the whole show. Just me, my black cat and a tale or two waiting to be told. As to who is the wiser, well, that remains to be seen.

Long ago when I was a boy in college I discovered a network of tunnels underneath the city where I studied just outside my nation’s capitol. One tunnel led to a bowling alley. Another led to a restaurant beneath the street. Many and varied were the destinations I discovered by opening a door in the wall of the Stamp Building of that school long ago and descending the stairwell to my horizons. And though I never fully explored the city beneath the city all those years ago, my dreams are now filled with men plying their gondolas in the sewers and strange creatures, half dragon and half man, leading the way. I guess you might

say that my schoolboy explorations have led in the present to a whole universe of the mind. And for that I am grateful.

In my teenage years I was sometimes accused of giving some innocent party the evil eye. Not knowing what the evil eye was, I would ask its nature, only to be denied. “Oh, Will, you do know,” people would say. “Just stop doing it!”

But of course, I hadn’t a clue what I was doing that might be taken as an insult by these superstitious folk. This went on for a few years until all talk of that evil eye disappeared as if it had never come about in the first place. These days, some decades later, I hear of all manner of paranormal and supernatural notions, from ghosts that haunt my town to surefire ways to ward off the plague, but I have yet to hear of that evil eye again let alone be accused of imposing it on someone. I suppose it is just as well.

More than anything I am a poet and writer of the Abyss, of the darkness dwelling in us all. One day I will join my words as one.



REVIEWS

Wrestling With Gods as edited by Liana Kerzner and Jerome Stuart.

This is a strange, fulfilled fantasy trip with the gods of our imagination, whether it be a mechanical Jesus Christ, a vampire with delusions of holy communion, a Muslim seeking to know Allah through brain surgery, a school of fish worshipping the sun god above the ocean waters or a desert god that steals away the souls of the dead, and, unlike many of the radicals worshipping the gods of our own world, it need not be taken literally. Just the right anecdote for the dark, anxious times in which we are living. I enjoyed it.

The American Way of Death by Jessica Mitford. At times, I think of Jessica Mitford. Yes, Jessica Mitford with her American Way death with its expose of the funeral industry's price fixing and abuse of the grief ridden that changed our death landscape forever. What would she think of today's world, I wonder, with its natural burials and its body compositing sites and easier donation to medical science? "Well done, chaps!" she'd say. And then she'd take a look at our technological wonder, the World Wide Web with its Go Fund Me sites for funerals otherwise too expensive to afford, and she'd say, "There's work to be done. Better get cracking!" Yes, that's our reporter. Gotta love her. Read her book. I for one loved it.

Poetry En Plein Air by Marianne Szlyk. This is a book that has had the feel of an old painting in which figures come alive and deer speak with the voices of long dead ancestors. These poems ponder, here, a scene in an Eastern European chapel where once the author's grandparents prayed, there, a New York City club where the jazz greats played, and, over there, a beach years from now, where sea water invades an inland

city and jellyfish roam the streets. Backwards and forwards through time Mrs. Szlyk's poems roam until at last you put the book down from having read it cover to cover. Be warned. This book will astound your senses and make you dizzy from all the travels involved. Best find a seat and begin. It is well worth the effort involved. Five stars.

DAYS AMONG THE WORDS

Like a ghost among the living,
I move from room to room
and bookshelf to bookshelf.
Seeing what I shall make my very own.
Many men have mistaken me for dead.
Many women too.
I come and go with the nights.
The world outside my door
is a stranger to me
but the world inside is a friend.
I spend my day with words and time.
Stitching together meaning
from the fragments of my life.
Each moment passing
is an eternity with me.
I breathe and am at one.

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 248

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26 July 2020

Comments:

Jose Sanchez: Cover: Excellent: the character is deadly, armed to hades and gone, but has a pensive expression, as if considering whether violence was the answer. Good costume, good anatomy, good expression! Thank you most kindly! (I'm not watching TV these days so I don't know who The Mandalorian is...)

John Thiel: Nice front cover space art. Nice and "2001" ish! (Best movie ever made!) Interesting interior art, of the two youngsters each with a private interior universe.

re optimism and pessimism, the optimist takes so much more joy in those occasions where he can say, "See? I told you!" When the pessimist says, "See, I told you!" it is generally not an occasion for cheering. Unfortunately, for the optimist, "surprises" are, by and large, unpleasant. As in all things there is a balance, but, optimist or pessimist, we still have our **real work** in front of us, doing all we can in concrete reality to **make things better.** Even the pessimist can acknowledge the importance of hard work, to make things turn out **not quite as badly**. To the pessimist, the comforting fact is, well, it could have been a lot worse.

Jeffrey Redmond's story "Higher Education" was itself educational --



didactic, Bertolt Brecht would say. This story is a kind of bait-and-switch dystopia, offering hope then snatching it away again at the end. The best "horror" works by giving relief and comfort and then pulling the rug out from under the reader. I'm thinking of John Campbell's hellish little yarn, "A Walk in the Dark." Tripping and falling is bad, but tripping and falling **just short of the finish line** is so much worse.

Will S. Mayo: I'd never heard before that British gentry paid to have hermits live in caves on their estates. At last, a job I could qualify for! (Grin!) My own life is largely solitary, with correspondence being the bulk of my human interaction. These days, I don't even see people at work, my workplace being severely diminished with 97% of my company working from home. (I'm still driving in to the office building daily; I'm part of the 3%.) There have been great hermits, or perhaps a better term is "recluses," in the history of literature and the arts. Gaugin running off to Tahiti is an intriguing example.

The biography of Poe sounds like interesting reading! I may track that one down. Poe is my "go to" writer when I'm stuck at home with a cold. He goes so well with a fever! For some reason, I can't

enjoy reading him when I am healthy, but when in the throes of delirium, he's the best!

George Phillies: I am just (barely!) young enough to have missed the great mimeo age of fannish self-publication. I came into fandom at the beginning of the Xerox era, and was a very regular patron of a very lovely copy shop -- College Copy Center -- within walking distance of my old college digs. I've moved...and so have they, and, not only do they still exist, they're still within walking distance! Of course, now, the paradigm has shifted once more, and most of what we do is electronic. Plus ca change!

"If it doesn't use calculus it is not real physics." Alas and alack, I am at that point in existence where if it doesn't use Differential Equations it is not real physics. And DiffyQ are just right at the edge of my skill zone....or perhaps just across from it.

(I did once solve the DiffyQ of gravity -- acceleration is proportional to negative 1 over the distance squared -- and out pops Kepler's Third Law, just like magic. But that's 2nd year calculus...and I only took three.)

Interesting segment of your novel in progress. What strikes me most particularly is how low-key the characters are, very remote and flat of emotional affect. They can be in the most dire circumstances and sound as if they're reading news headlines to one another. Compare and contrast with the accounting professor, at the end, who loses his cool and flies completely off the handle. A fascinating blend of emotional tonalities! This seems to be an universal in your writing: your heroes always behave as if observing the world at a distance, and don't seem to become fully involved, emotionally, with what is going on about them -- sometimes even when it's a matter of life or death!

Lorien Rivendell: Aye, you remember well! I always printed my physical N'APA contribution on green paper, and my e-submission is

green in honor of those days. Your pink background is nifty too, and, as you note, light enough that it does not impair readability.

I agree, re the advantages of electronic versions. Over time, alas, all my old physical N'APAs have been lost, thrown away to reduce the hellish (heavenly!) clutter that is fandom's birthright. But since I am paying for an online backup subscription service, my e-copies have a kind of immortality. Also, e-copies take up wonderfully little space.

(This is why I adore my Kindle e-Reader! I've saved three entire bookshelves, just so far!)

Samuel Lubell: Alas, I have to agree with you on why the Pandemic is harming the U.S. so particularly hard. We, as a nation, have embraced "the cult of the individual" to an extreme degree, to the point where we protect "the one" even to the point of allowing "a whole bunch of others" to die horribly. What's so very sad is that we're wasting resources. Other countries have national health programs that provide *better* health care to their people, at a *lower cost.* But we refuse to accept this, on the (imaginary!) principle of total self-sufficiency. (The major hole in this fantasy is that we accept for-profit health insurance....which is a system of group protection depending on subscriptions from "the many" in order to pay for treatment and care for "the one." "Insurance" is a form of socialism that the free market invented!)

Oh, how I remember reading everything I could find by Zenna Henderson! I loved her stuff! Eerie, loving, thoughtful, warm, quirky, and intelligent. Of all her stories, I think the one that stays with me the most is "One of Them," where there are six women working as office clerks in a super secret military facility, totally isolated from anyone else in the world. One of Them has become so familiar with the thinking of all the others that...she has forgotten which one of them she actually is! She is "One of Them" -- but which? A brilliant little testament to solipsism. (Ought to be read in conjunction with Robert Heinlein's "They.")

Fun closing graphic of dragon and castle!

RIP Jomil Mulvey

The first person that I know personally who has succumbed to Covid. She was in *terrible* health anyway; she'd had her legs amputated due to severe blood clots, and she had been taking massive doses of blood- thinners for decades. She was still hanging on, until she got infected with Covid in her nursing home, and that was the end.

Jomil was a neo-pagan, a Wiccan, and the first I had ever met in my sheltered life. She and I fell instantly into a life-long rivalry, always friendly, always supportive, but always mutually incomprehensible. I'm a hard-edged Isaac Asimov science fan, and she was mystical and arcane and believed in reliving past lives, performing magic, seeing spiritual auras, and the like. We each believed the other was quite full of shit, but we managed to remain friends withal. She and I had a very long and fruitless correspondence, often writing to one another "in persona," as certain of our role-playing characters. Any kind of "meeting of minds" was absolutely impossible, and we, recognizing this, managed to get by without it. We agreed regarding moral human virtues, and had similar ideals with respect to "The Good."

Harry S Truman: Where the Buck Stops

I just finished reading this book, a collection of ideas and mini-essays by President Truman, collected throughout the years of his retirement up unto his death. The book is written in a terribly naive style, as if for children -- but it is NOT a children's book. It is merely painfully childish. All through the book, I was struck by the author's forceful naivete. To tell the truth, the best term I have for the author is "A Horse's Ass." Truman intended to be plain-spoken, to "give 'em hell," and to speak truth to power. Instead, he recites

platitudes, over-simplifies history terribly, and is either in thrall to "conventional wisdom" or else succumbs to infantile tautologizing. Truman reveals a little of himself, but not very much. The book is void of real insights. Ideas that ought to be examined in significant detail -- the dropping of the first nuclear weapons, or the decision to go to war in Korea -- are just shrugged off. "I did what was right." Anyone looking for a clear understanding of such major issues must go somewhere else, for here, we get almost nothing of value from the man himself.

(It was quite amusing to see him lambaste Richard Nixon!)

Quantum Computing

I am thrilled beyond all measure by the almost daily breakthroughs in quantum computing. The "proof of concept" experiment has been conducted successfully, showing that computations can be performed in seconds that conventional computers require a very long time to do. There is some push-back, some disagreement, but at this point it certainly appears that the technology shows remarkable promise.

Some have claimed this is wildly revolutionary and will "change the human condition." I'm not willing to go quite that far... Has conventional computing really "changed the human condition?" Maybe... Satellite weather prediction has certainly changed our day-to-day existence. The Internet is nice, but it really isn't so vastly more powerful than the old way of doing business. Faster, certainly, but mega-corporations were able to do business by post, fax, and phone.

Quantum Computing looks to me to be a wonderful new tool, especially for working with certain problems involving very large matrices. It might help us figure out fusion containment, which, so far, involves some very messy computational challenges. It might lead to breakthroughs in scheduling, planning, and itinerary applications, improving such things as seating on airlines. These are

problems, especially when scaled-up to millions of items, that can be solved with ordinary computers, but not fast. QC offers "blink of an eye" answers.

I'm an enthusiast! I think this is gonna be great! Not "world changing" but great!

Synergy



September 2020

NAPA MAILING

Synergy is the NAPA fanzine of John Thiel, whose address is 30 N. 19th Street, Lafayette, Indiana 47904 and whose email address is kinethiel@mymetronet.net . It is devoted, in spirit, to cultural topics, but is frequently, like most fanzines we see, talking about what's involved in doing a fanzine. The name of the fanzine signifies getting together, and I consider my zine to be in the spirit of a more united fandom, which is the same attitude I have in my Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau, and in my History and Research Bureau I try to make people more acquainted with fandom and show proofs of what fandom has been like. We have a hiatus in the fandom of today which ought to be rectified. As Origin is available to fandom on the N3F spot, I might get a broad viewing of that broader outlook. Recently I found Ionisphere among the fanzines displayed in the Fanac fanzine displays, and available to the viewers complete, and I hope that they will decide also to display Origin there.

Synergy, like my other fanzines, represents the advent of 9th Fandom, the progressive fandom which picks up the pieces where fandom has been failing and reassembles things.

Look for Ninth Fandom on Facebook under the name Ninth Fandom. We are still building up rather than rolling, but we are there.

Cover by Linda Gadbois

EDITORIAL



Keeping Fandom Going Is A Worthy Endeavor

A lot of fen have been expressing the exact opposite of what my editorial title states in their discussions with me. Those are usually brief discussions occurring on the net, but occasionally I hear it in paper mail as well. What is it that I hear? I hear that Keeping Fandom Going is a waste of time and not worth the effort, and that it clearly won't succeed because there is no sign that fandom can recover and be anything like what it once was. Well, judging by the display of early fanzines at Fanac dot Org, it is already a lot like it once was, but not being progressive in the way they were. I suggest that our attitude in being fans needs improvement. I'm saying it's worth doing in itself because it keeps us doing something, and that is better than inertia and sitting aside from things. It doesn't need to build a glorious future for fandom as long as it keeps something happening for us. Although visualization of a future, considering that science fiction is a literature of speculation and forward-seeking, is a fine thing to have with us.

I've been seeing some improvements for the better on net fandom, in response to those who say there have been no improvements for the better or improvements at all. Science Fiction is being found more in the Wikipedia, now has a place it did not earlier have on Google Images, and continues to justify the Fanac science fiction project, which has shown itself to be not dormant after what was apparently a long struggle for them. And here in the N3F we have more bureaus and more publications. My three N3F

fanzines are not looked upon by some as an improvement but rather as being “just some fanzines”, but I would call it an improvement to have three more NFFF publications. Moreover, I think their contents are having an effect of improvement. I am trying to have this effect, and that in itself is an improvement, the presence of someone trying to do that. If something I attempt does fall through, the improvement remains in my mind, where I am glad to retain it. It helps me build my mind up, just as though I were an energy-being. And I have helped to do it. Self-improvement is a fine thing to accomplish.

Saying fandom needs nothing to continue going on the way it has done is like saying there are no First Causes, sequences are not initiated, no one need be at the controls of anything. That’s our new computerized attitude of once something is started, it never stops, and takes care of itself well enough like it is programmed to do, so just take it easy. At least it is admitted, though, that there is a programming and an on switch, or we would have a straight line going on infinitely in two directions. But the resulting indolence from having this attitude toward a computer ends up overlooking starting the machine up at all. And while we’re not being busy, the programmers are. You have both people who don’t do very much and people who are always busy involved as two confronted streams in a computer system’s operation. You assume those computer programmers take a break when some programming is all over to live just as easily as you do with their programmed setups, but actually they are too fond of programming to take this advantage of having done it. But fandom isn’t a computer system and has no programmers at all, and it’s desirable that there be at least some busyness involved or fandom might be left behind, just a series of dormant sites on the net, the way some science fiction sites are already, eventually to be removed when noted. Let us develop some of the spirit of doing something (the way the Fanac Project does) and get involved in what is otherwise simply a visual activity.

Computers seem to have absorbed fandom, and a danger this presents to fandom is that fandom will be computing rather than all the other things it does. We should avoid doing computer things rather than fan activity if we wish to preserve net fandom. It should not become like the computer but should rather be receiving what benefits there are in computers for fandom—making use of the computers, rather than following computer programming to achieve computer objectives. Otherwise we do not, in fact, have fanac here, but are joining with the system in seeing what can be done with it.

BORED GAMES by Jeffrey Redmond



A strange past-time, perhaps...but life's strange just that way. Anyone for "Angst"?

From the ancient Er-Dan manuscripts (Codex 3144), as translated by Ed-Mon:

On the planet of the three moons, after the war of salvation was won by the forces of the nearer continent, the troops were demobilized and returned to their homes for rest and recuperation. The units of the largest city were sent home first, as these had been away at the front for the longest period of time. The survivors were very ill, emaciated, and exhausted, and most of them also had wounds from combat situations. In the denser residential section of the city, the volunteers and conscripts from there returned, and one of these was the young reservist Geo-Frx. He had been terribly wounded in his left foot and leg, and he had to be carried back by others because of this. His wounds would heal in time, but he would always move about with a steeply pronounced limping from then on.

His family, neighbors, and friends were all glad to see him again after so long, and they were sorry for his crippled condition. But they were proud of his medallions and

other honors, and he would receive both a military service and a disability pension from the salvation leaders in the capitol. Geo-Frx slowly adjusted and settled back into civilian life again. He rested and ate well, and after awhile he began to feel more alert and communicative again. He told everyone else about his adventures in the salvation war, and of the many battles and skirmishes that they had fought and won. He found that he enjoyed winning and being a part of the victorious side, but he also found that he was then more experienced and knowledgeable about things than were those who had remained behind. And, after more time, Geo-Frx also found that others stopped visiting him as often, and that everyone had heard his stories over and over to the point where they were all losing further interest in them. He could not move around very well, and he had to hobble with a crutch to even get from his sleeping platform to the meal table. So Geo-Frx usually just sat and waited for whatever would occur next, and he also began to become quite impatient and restless because of this.

The season ended and the next one began, and the weather grew colder, as the solar star was seen to be further away and less radiant for the remainder of the year. Geo-Frx's family remained indoors more, and he soon became even more annoyed with the tedium and boredom of his inactive existence. But his old mother's mother suddenly died, and they were saddened by her loss. The family then had a funeral for her, and the neighbors all came to express their condolences. The old female's second husband, Vil-Hialm, and Geo-Frx's foster grandfather then came to live with them. He was an old veteran from the military vehicle repair service in the wars of long before, who had returned and who'd had a choice of a number of young widows to take up with. He had married his personal selection of the best cook of them all, and he had always eaten very well indeed ever since. But then with his wife dead he had no one to look after him any more. And so they set up a sleeping platform for him, in a little spare room their dwelling fortunately had, and the old male settled in comfortably. He was humble, quiet, and unassuming, and he gratefully enjoyed the hospitality that he received there. He gave them his pension payments, and he was well looked after in return. Vil-Hialm was always fed first at mealtimes, and they enjoyed watching him eat, and especially as consuming all of the various kinds of foods then available were his favorite activity. They lovingly joked with him that because he was the eldest one there he had "seniority", and, always feeling welcomed and included, this also pleased him to no end.

But, being elderly, Vil-Hialm also could not move around unless aided by a cane. He also would get depressed at being too old to do anything any more. And, as the others

in the house came and went with their various jobs and activities, he and Geo-Frx were sometimes left alone together to just fend for themselves. At first they were uncommunicative, especially because the old one was so quiet and shy. But after a short while they began talking about things. They shared their battle experiences, and the old one told the young one about events of long before he had been born. Geo-Frx listened patiently and he always politely agreed with Vil-Hialm. And, after another short while, they became good friends and grew quite fond of each other.

Vil-Hialm had with him a finely-crafted board and pieces set for playing table games. It was his pride and joy, and he had always enjoyed having and using it. The carved figurines each represented placement, movement, and strength capabilities, and he and Geo-Frx began to sit together and look at these. The younger one thought that it was a silly and a time-wasting thing to do, and something that only little offspring did. But he placated the old one's request to play the table game with him. They set up the pieces, but the first game was over very quickly because Geo-Frx was quite bored with it all. He concentrated and took every advantage of Vil-Hialm, maneuvering his playing pieces rapidly to eliminate all of those of his aged opponent. He then sat back and smirked, but then he saw how embarrassed and disappointed the old one was at having lost so easily and quickly. Geo-Frx then realized that he had actually won nothing at all.

The younger one then suggested to the older one that it was merely "beginner's luck", and that they should play more games. Reluctantly, the aged one agreed, and they began again. This time the game lasted much longer, and Geo-Frx took his time to allow Vil-Hialm to be able to follow along and keep up. And the young male always let his foster grandfather win from then on. This was not ever done so obviously or easily, and the board games always lasted for long amounts of time. Sometimes they even had to wait until after a meal to finish one. And, of course, they always interrupted their games for meals. Sometimes they even stayed up later than the others there to finish a game. Geo-Frx always maneuvered his pieces skillfully around the board, and always just enough to keep each game interesting. And always towards the end of each game, when most of the playing figurines were eliminated, Geo-Frx always maneuvered his pieces skillfully across the board, and always just enough to keep each game interesting. And always towards the end of each game, when most of the playing figurines were eliminated, Geo-Frx would make some "stupid" mistake. He would then yell out loudly and pound his fist hard on the table, and he would show old Vil-Hialm what he, Geo-Frx, had just done "wrong". In this way the elder one was clearly able to see his own sudden

advantage, and to then eliminate the last of his young opponent's pieces to always finally win. And this always made the old one very happy and contented indeed. He was too old to serve in the transportation service, but he was not too old to win at the board-gamings, and thus he still mattered.

In a season afterwards, Vil-Hialm became quite ill, and he was taken to his sleeping platform to rest. A board game was, as usual, in progress, and Geo-Frx set it carefully away to hopefully return to it at another time. But one night soon after, the old one went to sleep, and he died peacefully in it. He was mourned and missed, and they had a good funeral pyre for him. Geo-Frx left the board game exactly as it was, and he set it on the empty sleeping platform as a kind of personal gesture of good memory. He was glad that by always letting the old one win he had given the kind, gentle, and good-natured Vil-Hialm a happy time for his final days.

In a later season, the sudden death plagues reached to the nearer continent, and the largest city was completely emptied from the many dyings and from the mass evacuations. During the next era, the winds blew in the sands from the surrounding areas, and most of the city was buried. It was almost lost and forgotten about, except on the ancient maps in the capitol archives that were saved and later taken by the Terrans to the neighboring Er-Da.

In more recent times, the archaeological expeditions also reached the nearer continent on the three mooned planet, and they were also able to excavate much of the largest city itself. In the little room of the dwelling that the family had lived in, they found the game board with the carved figurines still set up in their maneuvering positions. The archaeologists carefully recorded it, stored it, and took it back with them to the Er-Dan Colony institute for further study and analysis. Eventually, they concluded that since it was set on an otherwise empty platform, all by itself, it must have been a thing of great importance and significance. Knowing that the nearer continentals were a religious culture which kept shapes to worship in their dwellings, the archaeologists concluded that this must likewise be the case with the game board and playing pieces. The carved figures must have represented deities, as they had been obviously arranged so as to enable the most spiritual harmony to develop for the inhabitants. Such were the findings of the learned scholars of the Archaeological Department of our modern era.

The game board and pieces are on permanent display at the institute's Museum Section. The general public may visit during regular hours, or by appointment for special tour groups. Advance reservations for group visits will permit entrance tickets to be held

and sold at better discounts. The snack bar has been expanded and upgraded to the status of a fully licensed restaurant, and it serves a wide variety of interplanetary cuisines. The institute is under the same civic regulations as all other governmental buildings. It is generally closed weekends and holidays, or in cases of renewed conflicts with any and all invaders from other worlds.



Art by Poncho Jo

COMMENTS ON THE OTHER MAILINGS

Will Mayo. I can't help thinking how good a fanzine you would have if it were expanded into being something other than a perzine.

Jefferson Swycaffer. There are numerous social advances in the last century and in this one, as well, but they are paralleled by regression (as you might have been saying with the two steps back—that might have been an optimistic ratio) and it all depends on what you are looking at and where you are at on the map. Liberalism's advances might have been fully accompanied by its drawbacks. For instance, our town was integrated following very good standards, but one drawback was all the incompatibilities were made apparent. Existentially you see people talking happily about the new enlightenment, but strangling from the proximity of opposing customs. An instance of a society not being equal to its good intentions? That rather resembles ineptitude with the new technology, and brings to mind that we may be experiencing the "growing pains" of a period of advancement at a particular intensity.

An Orwellian equation regarding slavery: A slave is a slave because he is unworthy. A slave master is not a worthy thing to be so a slave master is unworthy. A slave is the unworthy subject of an unworthy man.

George Phillies. As of this month we have three fine artists, I refer to the addition of the fellow who did next month's near-professional cover for Ionisphere, new member Nathan Warner.

I am especially interested in presenting good, far-out art to people. It communicates things that the printed word does not.

Would it be a misuse of treasury funds to pay printing costs for the mailing of N3F zines to members who lack computers? Also postal costs? There are probably people willing to print, collate, and mail them, but not pay for it.

Redmond's world seems to parallel an earthly realm pretty closely, so it is safe to use outre earth photos to illustrate the story.

Lorien. By "roster" I mean the name and address of all members being listed in each issue to show who is in the apa and who is still in it, so each member knows who is there. It would be interesting if there was on file back memberships of the apa from the start. This is good for memory, as in a computer's "memory".

How often does your knitting group meet?

Samuel Lubell. Jefferson Swycaffer has that at three steps forward and two back, this

same mailing. I'd like progress to be in the right form.

On the whole, the response to action here in the United States has been very well handled and with the utmost intelligence, both on the part of the government and concerned people. It seems highly likely that things will be dealt with effectively.



DIFFENT RAINFALL by Betty Streeter

Ran from the sky

It's poured.

Diffent rain Fall Pour in people's life

Rain falls

People lost someone

Rain falls

Of people illness.

Rain falls

Having nowhere to Live

Rains rains

We all together
We all get rain on as one.



end of issue

Ye Murthered
Master Mage

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Comments on issue 247

First, Congratulations to all on a 36 page issue.

Cover – the Mandalorian Behold - a female soldier who has a solid figure and not a championship beach volleyball competitor. A fine piece of work by the illustrious cover artist.

Synergy 23: I agree it is certainly better in broad public efforts to focus on the points where we are making progress, and could so better, rather than being loudly negative about the points where we are doing worse. Sometimes the point where we start is extremely bad, so one should note politely what the situation is without unneeded pejoratives. There will also be complaints that the person who identified the situation did not propose solutions, but sometimes you can identify a problem – the nuclear reactor is exploding – without being able to propose what might be done about it. As a minor aside, if you check I believe you will find that there are actually three APA contributors who are members of the directorate or are officers.

The Libertarian party candidate for president, since you asked, is Jo Jorgensen. More on politics I shall not say.

The military campaign description in Jeffrey Redmond's Higher Education has a more-or-less unique style, third person, with very

little reference to individual characters as opposed to the actions of groups of people. It reads like a history. As a history, it's well done.

As always, Will Mayo gives us an interesting poem.

The Contents of a Good Life: Your cover appears to be the top section of a Lovecraft award. I gather the sculpting was done by Gaughan. My own reaction to the image had always been that the award showed an image of a Deep One, not a human being at all. However, the figure much resembles the way Gaughan drew human beings in his cartoons. There has recently been controversy over the Lovecraft award, in particular his description of the Deep Ones and their semi-human acolytes.

There is indeed time, though we may hope through good living to refuse its effects at least for a long time. I had forgotten the English Georgian Period desire to have a resident hermit. Poe might have done well as a hermit; he certainly had enough strange ideas and morbid revelations in his tales.

Archive Midwinter: it is indeed the case that the N3F has gradually accommodated to advances that once upon a time would have been said to be science fiction, notably the Internet. On the other hand, if we were limited to paper issues, we couldn't support the existence of our public and electronic members, because the copy count of The National Fantasy fan would need to be six times as large, and each of our other eight fanzines would need to be printed, collated, and mailed, at vast expense, not to mention that we don't seem to have many volunteers for printing and mailing issues of our zines. I have requests from non-Internet-active members that our zines, other than The National Fantasy Fan, be printed physically,

but I don't offhand have any volunteer willing to do this. After all, Tightbeam is a monthly of thirty-two pages, The N3F Review of Books is a monthly of forty or fifty pages, Origin and Eldritch Science and Mangaverse each have their page count, as do Ionisphere and Films Fantastic and NAPA, so we are generating something like two hundred pages a month of fanzine. That's respectable.

As it happens, I wrote a Holmes pastiche, The Puzzle of the Peregrinating Coach, which was after some editing accepted by Baen's Universe and published there. It's a new and different version of the disappearing locomotive, set in a parallel universe where Master Detective Ronald Helmesham and his faithful amanuensis, the practicing dentist, must figure out how a one car passenger train carrying a valuable treaty disappeared from a section of railroad in the deep of the night. I did have to edit the tale slightly before it was accepted for publication; in particular, the footnotes, and the footnotes to the footnotes, as found in fine Victorian fiction, had to go. The footnotes referenced such matters as the various Martian invasions, and the efforts of a particular Member of Parliament to ban the teaching of foreign languages within the United Kingdom. As you asked, is in fact the case that I have substantially jettisoned my American political activities of past years.

My grandfather loved tales of the old West. There were several series of dime novels, including the Buffalo Bill and Jesse James series, of which he had -- though not always in first edition -- a complete set. Your point about the place of women and westerns is substantially well-made, though recall that a significant number of women fought in the Union Army during the War of the Slaveholder's Rebellion, including at least

one who won the Congressional Medal of Honor. Blaming the appearance of women on the twenty-first century is perhaps slightly unfair to the last century, as witness the nineteen fifties television show Annie Oakley, not to mention the one of the female heroines in Gene Autry's The Phantom Empire. Betsy Baxter was played by Betsy King Ross, who as a young teenager was a national champion trick rider doing her own stunts. After one more film a decade later in which she played a young woman who disguised herself as a young man on a cattle drive, she left acting to earn a doctorate and became a university faculty member.

I completely agree with your position on the abuse of the poor, helpless, defenseless plural pronoun. It is a modern style that hopefully will not last very long.

Notes from Galaxy Far, Far Away: interesting comments on Doctor Who of the 1960s. I think it's worthwhile to emphasize just what a poor country the United Kingdom, not to mention the rest of Europe, was a half-century ago. Your color experiment worked very nicely, at least on my screen.

At least as I set up NAPA, there is no minac (minimum activity) requirement and no reason for a limitation on the number of contributors. I suppose eventually we run into trouble because our electronic distribution arrangement complains vigorously if the file is larger than 8 MB, but as a practical matter we are not very close to 8 MB.

Your suggestion of a roster, showing when people joined N'APA, has the minor difficulty that for folks who have been around for a while we don't have very good records. It's a fine idea, but someone else might need to figure out how to do it. There

are certainly people who have been extremely active in fandom for very long time.

Amazon does indeed have a Print on Demand service for books, but there is the minor practical obstacle for an author that just as you have to handle the e-book formatting yourself, or hire someone at great expense to do it, you also have to handle the formatting for the paper document. I just published a freshman physics text, *Physics One*, in paper format only. To make sure things work correctly more or less the first time — actually they worked the first time — I generated the text PDF myself. That was not as difficult as it sounds. I wrote the text using Latex, which is an editing program optimize it for producing scientific documents with lots of equations. The other half of that is that there is no electronic version of *Physics One* available, because these electronic readers simply are not up to handling elaborate scientific notation yet.

The Adara short story, Practical Exercise, has now been published in one of the anthologies edited by Jagi Lamplighter and Chris Nuttall. It got some good reviews, and some less optimistic reviews. People who are looking for continuous combat all the time were likely to be disappointed.

Samizdat: Groan. What a name for your zine. Actually, I do remember Zenna Henderson and her stories. It was certainly good of NESFA to collect them and reprint them. Thank you for the other book reviews also. You are certainly right about how busy I am.

Practical Exercise, continued

Some of my fellow students were looking for a way to hide. Several of the smarter ones were dropping extra items into their

bookbags, preparing to run for a door in case the Serene Master started throwing spells in my direction. I stood and bowed, formally, the bow of a landheir to someone whose rank you do not know. “I hear and obey,” I managed. I fumbled only slightly in dropping items helter-skelter into my carryall, scooped up my cloak, and headed rapidly for an exit.

“Faster!” he screamed. “Faster!”

I did not look over my shoulder when I closed the door behind me. What was going on? If this was a staged event, he should have told me about it in advance. There are calming spells, whose overuse is highly unwise. I nonetheless cast one on myself, then headed out the nearest exit door and took several sharp turns so I was completely out of sight of the exit. A travertine bench set into a tall barberry hedge summoned. I set my down my carryall and shook out my cape. Then I took a minute to put my carryall into order, pens and notebooks clipped where they belonged, the book I’d been reading before class down at the bottom. Now what? I almost unrolled my paper without thinking. Wrong. I hit it with three counterspells and a detect. It appeared to be inert. With gloves on and wards up I used my pen-knife to cut around the seal, which I left in place. For the first three pages, his comments had been glowing. Then I reached the forest fire. He’d written nothing.

OK, I thought, I’m paying for four courses, the lectures, and, of course, library access. What do I do? And what did he mean about ‘pass with full credit’? Dorrance actually has a remarkable number of letter grades, including four sorts of failing grade, but ‘pass’ did not ring a bell. OK, I am supposed to have an academic procedures advisor, that being Professor Jackson. He

won't tell me what to do, but he can at least tell me what is going on.

The History Tower

Jackson was a historian, studying the origins of the Common Tongue. I'd thought to look that up. I hadn't visited his office; I had checked where it was. I hadn't imagined why I would need to bother him, but it had occurred to me that if I needed to speak to him I might need to find him very quickly. I was, alas, right.

The History Tower was at the north end of campus. I took off toward it at a fast march, cutting east toward the edge of campus where there was less traffic, then following the perimeter road. History Tower was deeply crenelated, with classrooms on the first two floors and faculty offices above. The offices faced the sea; the back of the tower was the History Library. History was nearly unique in having its own library, open to its faculty and advanced students.

Jackson's office was five stories off the ground, half way up the tower. I took the outer stairs, which had a landing with a view every eight feet. If I were an artist, as opposed to having survived a drawing class, I would doubtless have been fascinated by the progressive change in perspective as I climbed the eighty feet to his office. Seen from above, Academy roofs were a rainbow palette of colors and patterns.

Faculty offices were shaped like pie wedges, narrow near the central atrium, wide at the building's outer wall. Even by Commonality standards, the floors and walls were massively thick. Of course, the place was full of books. I gave a sigh of relief at seeing that Jackson's door was open.

I found Jackson seated at a huge desk, quietly chanting something I couldn't quite hear. "Ah," he said, "Miss Triskittenion." He hadn't looked up, and I had yet to knock on the door. "Please give me a moment, and I'll be free. I have another dozen lines of scansion to check." He returned to his chanting. I dutifully waited for him to finish.

"Please come in," He finally said, pointing at a chair.

"I'm sorry to bother you," I said, "but there were difficulties with my Ethics class, and I'm not sure what to do."

"Ah, difficulties.

NOTES FROM A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY #23



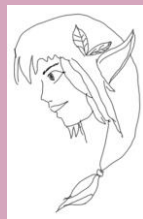
September 2020

For N'APA 248

Lorien Rivendell

(Lauren Clough)

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Natter

I don't feel much like writing stuff right now. I'll just drop some memes I've made. Some are from my own photos and maybe try to catch up next time.



**I JUST READ THAT LAST
YEAR 4,123,651
PEOPLE GOT MARRIED.
I DON'T WANT TO
START ANY TROUBLE
BUT SHOULDN'T THAT
BE AN EVEN NUMBER?**

abcNEWS

Woman marries 100-year-old
tree in hopes of saving it from
being cut down



I visited a haunted castle in New Hampshire.

**They start young
trying to kill us**

**so they can take over
the world**

Samizdat...



...Letters of Comment

Synergy 23: Shouldn't there be a middle ground between optimism and pessimism? Still, I surprised people at a work training for saying I'd rather have planning done by a pessimist than an optimist as the pessimist would plan for things going wrong while the optimist would assume everything would work as planned. Science fiction tends to be optimistic since it assumes things will still be here in the future and even the pessimistic works set in the aftermath of a disaster tends to assume humanity will survive and rebuild. I agree that science fiction tends to solve problems of scientific singlemindedness. I find that the old I get the more science fiction and fantasy keeps my mind open to new ideas. This is why I see greater inclusion of minority voices in sf/fantasy as a good thing. Thanks for the kind words about my joining the APA.

Higher Education: "Educational and military synthesis" is an interesting approach to a story, almost an essay without characters (only one paragraph), so it reads almost like a sociological study

of a fictional culture.

Contents of a Good Life: "Strange Doings". Yes, most of us are hermits in these COVID days. Our lives are communicating via phone and computer, rarely venturing out into possibly infectious surroundings.

Archive Midwinter: I think the advantages of computerized fandom make life much easier than the mimeo days. (I was never involved in mimeo fandom, but my first year as a teacher that was how I made worksheets, even though I created them on a computer and didn't ever have to literally cut and paste.) I'm afraid a lot more than 300 Americans don't read at all. According to a [2019 PEW](#) study 27% of Americans have not read a book in whole or in part over the past year. And only 28% have read more than 10. I confess, I never saw the appeal of Westerns (as film or as books) and only occasionally read mysteries that are not sf/fantasy. I'd say most of my non-sf/fantasy reading is nonfiction with some classics and historical fiction. Grammarwise, "they" is rapidly becoming accepted as the gender neutral single pronoun as an alternative to he/she. It confuses me too since I assume "they" means plural.

Ye Murdered Master Mage: Yes, you caught the pun in my zine's name. I wouldn't say my hopes for Asimov's magazine were dashed as I've happily subscribed for the last 40 years. On your fiction Closer, I'm a little confused by the sudden jump from military invasion to magical school. Are these snippets of novels/stories?

Notes from a Galaxy: I agree that electronic zines are easier. Hmm I wonder what SCA is doing in these COVID times.



...Thoughts on the Science Fiction Canon

Originally Published in *The WSFA Journal*/May/June 2020

Recently there has been some debate over the issue of a science fiction canon. In the 1940s and 50s, it was possible for fans to read everything in science fiction. Even in the 1960s and 70s devoted fans could have read everything important. But since then it has been impossible to keep up with the new stuff (reading the whole 1632 series is practically a full-time job) let alone older material. Also, older science fiction is showing its age in many ways (and much of it was not all that well written at that time, writers and readers valued ideas and excitement over prose style.)



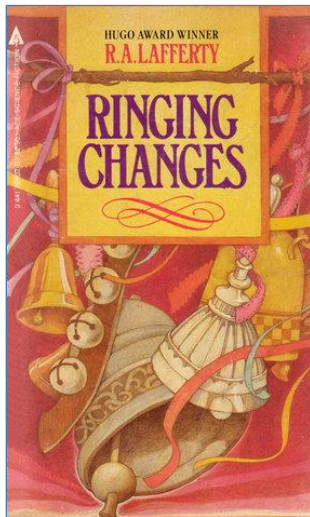
So does science fiction even need a canon? Are there some works that all fans should read?

This is where those of us who have been reading sf for 50 or so years say you cannot be a true fan unless you've read everything by Asimov, Heinlein, Clarke, Bradbury, Herbert, Zelazny etc. If anything such a didactic approach turns fans off and sends them scurrying to gaming or anime or anything that doesn't seem to require homework.

Instead, we should talk to fans about what they like to read and recommend books that paved the way for the current works they like. We should encourage fans of Harry Potter to read *Earthsea*, fans of *Star Wars* to read the *Lensmen* series, and those who like John Scalzi to read Heinlein. Science fiction writers are in a conversation with each other and the best ones have read something, say "yes, but" and then write their own take on it. So if you read Kingsbury's *Psychohistorical Crisis* without reading Asimov's *Foundation*, you're only getting half the conversation.

I'm not saying in order to read or even write SF/Fantasy you need to have read everything already written, but that the more you read older works, the better you can understand and appreciate new ones.

...(Mostly) Forgotten Author: R.A. Lafferty



R.A. Lafferty is not quite a forgotten author. But nearly all of his writing is out of print. The Library of America has published his *Past Master* in their *American Science Fiction: Four Classic Novels 1968-1969* set. A *Best of* collection is available in England and will be published in the U.S. in 2021 as a Tor Essential. Centipede Press has published a Lafferty Library as collectors' limited editions, but these sold out despite a \$50 price tag.

Lafferty always was a writer's writer (it is not by chance that each story in the *Best of* collection is introduced by a different big name author who loves Lafferty including Neil Gaiman, Harlan Ellison, Connie Willis, Jeff VanderMeer, Robert Silverberg, and Michael Swanwick). Even in his lifetime publishers would publish him because his work is so good, but stop because his work just did not sell. His later works tended to appear in chapbooks and fan publications. Lafferty was a stylist who wrote in a language that had more to do with Irish tall tales than the plain transparent style readers tend to prefer.

Many readers found his work challenging and missed most of the humor. They did not understand that this was what made reading him so rewarding.

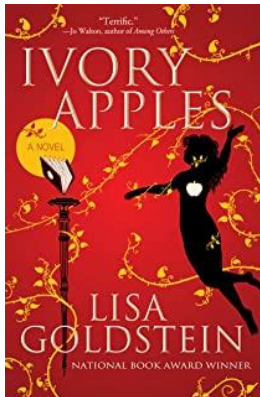
Raphael Aloysius Lafferty didn't start writing until he was in his 40s (in 1960) and largely stopped after age 70, although previously written works continued to appear. He specialized in writing about strange doings with a roundabout style. For Lafferty, the plot was just an excuse for the writing. Even though he wrote 23 novels in multiple genres, Lafferty is best remembered for his SF short stories. His best known novels are *Past Master* and the historical *Okla Hannali*.

He may not have had many readers, but those who did read him are devoted fans who kept his work alive. One of them, a writer named Neil Gaiman, who probably will never be the subject of a forgotten writer's column, convinced the Locus Magazine Foundation to buy the rights to his literary estate. There is even a [convention, Laffcon](#), dedicated solely to Lafferty. Collections include: *Nine Hundred Grandmothers*, *Strange Doings*, *Does Anyone Else Have Something Further to Add?*, *Ringin' Changes*, and *Lafferty in Orbit*.

If you've not read him, a number of his stories are available in the public domain from [Gutenberg.org](#) and [ralafferty.com](#). And keep an eye out for the *Best of* collection in 2021.

...Review of Lisa Goldstein's *The Ivory Apples*

Originally in *The WSFA Journal* March/April 2020



The Ivory Apples by Lisa Goldstein is the story of an obsessed fan turned to evil. The narrator's Aunt Maeve wrote a beloved novel, *Ivory Apples*, many years ago under her real name Adela Madden. But now she has hidden herself away from fans of the book who throw conventions about the novel, write letters, engage in endless speculation, and struggle to find out what happened to the author.

When the narrator, Ivy, was eleven, she encountered strange spirits in the woods near Aunt Maeve's house; one of them enters into her and starts altering her perceptions and behavior. Soon afterwards Ivy and her siblings encounter a woman at the local park, Kate Burden, who played games with them and gradually takes the place of a mother in their lives, although Ivy does not trust her. Then, after their father mysteriously dies in Kate's basement, the sisters discover their father's last will had

changed their guardian from his brother to Kate.

Kate horribly mistreats the sisters in an effort to convince them to tell her where to find their aunt. Kate has a form of magical control over the spirits, who turn out to be the source of the Greek myths about the muses. Ivy runs away, helped by the muse within her, but is determined to come back and fight Kate for her sisters' lives.

The magic here is low key. Kate's magic can create illusions and manipulate people to help her. The muse inside Ivy enhances her poetic talents and it turns out that Ivy's aunt also once had a muse in her, which may account for why her book is so powerful.

Although *Ivory Apples* does have some of the characteristics of a Young Adult novel - the age of the protagonist, the use of the first person, efforts by Ivy and her sisters to find their identities, the inability of adults to help, and even the first stages of falling in love - the book does not have the feel of a YA novel. The tone and the book's concerns seem to me to fit adults more than they do YA.

I recommend the book for readers more interested in characterization than action and who are willing to let a story mature slowly, rather than starting with a bang and going from excitement to more excitement.

Note: All opinions and thoughts expressed in this publication are those of Samuel Lubell and not any employer, client, or membership organization.